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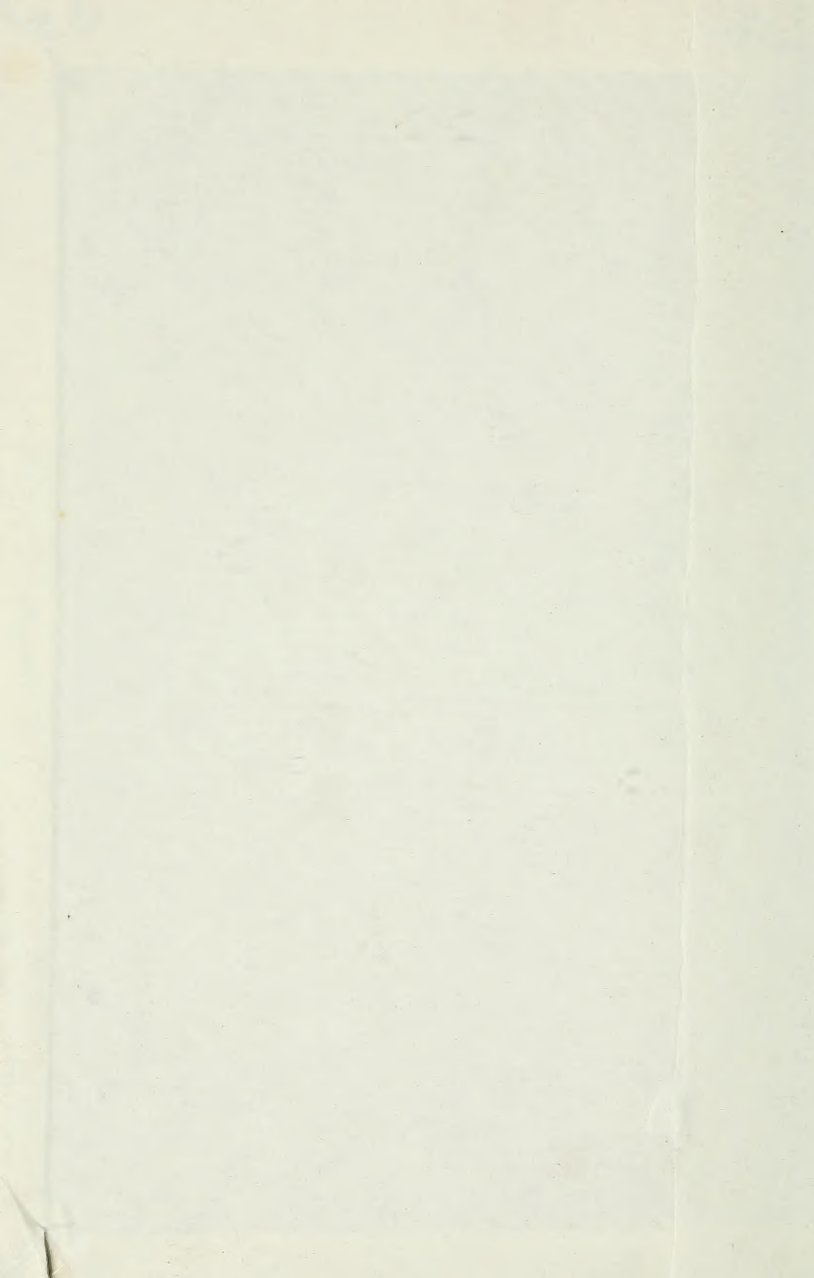
THE  
ANGLO-  
GERMAN  
PROBLEM  
BY  
CHARLES SAROLEA

THE KING OF THE BELGIANS writes: "IT IS A PRO-  
PHETIC BOOK. IT SHOWS RARE PERSPICACITY."

"THE BOOK THAT WILL GIVE THE MOST DIS-  
PASSIONATE AND BALANCED VIEW OF THE WHOLE  
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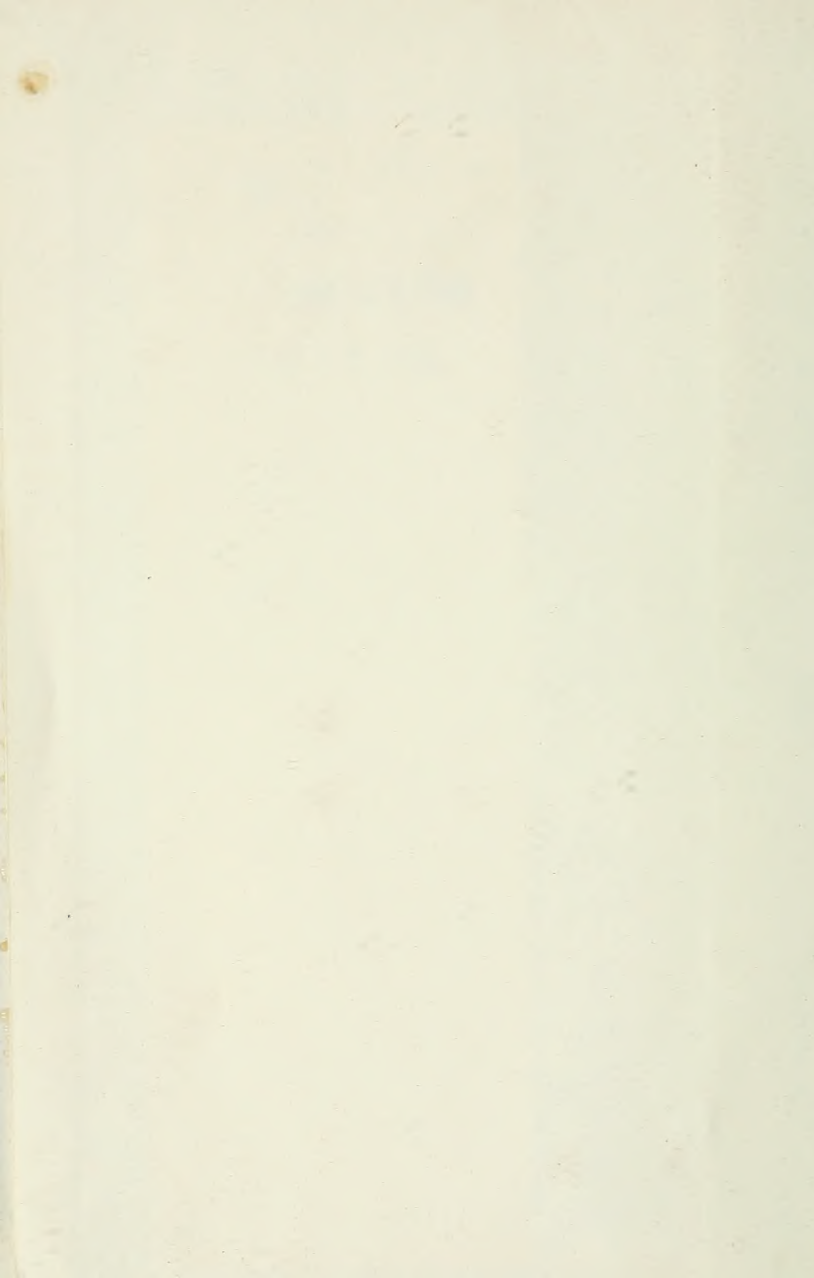
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THE ANGLO-GERMAN PROBLEM



# THE ANGLO-GERMAN PROBLEM

BY

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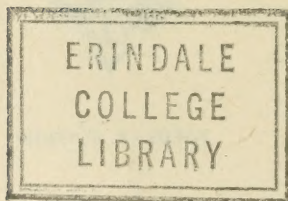
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## PREFACE.

### I.

IT is the object of the following pages, exhaustively and systematically, to study the Anglo-German problem in all its bearings, without reticence or ambiguity. I think it is high time that such a study should be undertaken. We are told, it is true, that the less said about a delicate situation the better. I do not believe it. I believe in outspokenness, in a free and frank discussion, provided the discussion be based on a thorough knowledge of the facts. Two great people must not be afraid of facing realities such as they are. In the words of Professor Harnack : "A permanent peace can only be achieved by hard intellectual effort and intellectual honesty." The first condition of a mutual understanding between England and Germany is that the whole case be brought before the tribunal of public opinion, that the truth, the whole truth, be told, that a festering wound be searched. The doctor who wants to cure a dangerous disease will not effect a cure by merely denying

the danger, or by making light of the disease, or by trusting to the *vis curativa* of nature. No ! Rather will he investigate and probe the wound. And he will not be afraid of inflicting pain, if inflicting pain means the salvation of the patient. By all means let us be sympathetic and conciliatory to our German cousins, let us be unstinting in our appreciation of their intellectual, artistic, and moral qualities, of their magnificent achievements. But also let us not cover up the defects of their character and the shortcomings of their policy, and let us not load their sins on our own shoulders. Christian humility is a great virtue, but even the most humble Christian would not confess to a sin which had been committed by somebody else ; for to make such a confession would be to tell a lie, and it is neither necessary nor desirable to tell a lie for the purpose of conciliating an opponent.

England cannot honestly admit the truth and reality of German grievances. England cannot admit that in the past she has ever adopted an attitude of contemptuous superiority towards the German people. Still less can England admit that she has systematically stood in the way of German colonial ambitions. She cannot admit it, for the simple reason that only a few years ago those German colonial ambitions did not exist. Almost to the end of his long rule, Bismarck would not have colonies, and he deliberately

encouraged France in that policy of African expansion which Germany now objects to. Germany would probably have had a much larger colonial empire if she had chosen to have it. History teaches us that in the development of European colonization there are some nations, like the Spaniards and Portuguese, that have come too early in the field. There are other nations, like England and Russia, that have come in the nick of time. And, finally, there are nations that have come too late. The German people have arrived too late in the race for colonial empire. They may regret it, but surely it would be monstrous to use the fact as a grievance against the people of this country. I may bitterly regret that twenty years ago I had not the money or the energy or the foresight to invest in the development of Argentine, or that I did not buy an estate in Canada, which in those early days I might have got for a hundred pounds, and which to-day would be worth hundreds of thousands. But that is no reason why I should hate the present possessors of landed property in the Far West or in the Far South. That is no reason why I should wish to dispossess them of land which they have legitimately acquired, whether they owe it to their luck or to their pluck, to favourable circumstances or to their initiative and perseverance.

It is a consummation devoutly to be wished that the two nations should approach the settlement of their differences in a spirit of conciliation and goodwill, but I do not see how the cause of peace can be promoted by encouraging a belief in the German people that they have a long standing score to settle. Let that belief once become a rooted conviction in their minds, and it will rankle and fester. On the contrary, let the German people be convinced that untoward circumstances or lack of foresight in their own statesmen are entirely to blame if their colonial ambitions are not to-day fulfilled or if they experience political difficulties at home, and the rancour and hatred against England will disappear from their hearts.

## II.

But because I refuse to believe that there is any justification in German grievances, I do not therefore agree with those well-meaning English writers who assert that the Anglo-German misunderstandings are entirely unreal, and that the present strained relations and the present ill-feeling between the two nations are purely superficial and are wholly due to artificial causes, that they are mainly the result of a mischievous Press campaign carried on by irresponsible journalists

and of a mistaken view of commercial interests. I submit that such statements are absolutely contrary to the real facts.

Alas ! the misunderstandings between England and Germany are not superficial but deep seated. They do not merely involve questions of commercial interests, but they are rooted in a conflict of principles and ideals. If a war between the two countries did break out, it would not be merely an economic war, like the colonial wars between France and England in the eighteenth century ; rather would it partake of the nature of a political and religious crusade, like the French wars of the Revolution and the Empire. *The present conflict between England and Germany is the old conflict between Liberalism and despotism, between industrialism and militarism, between progress and reaction, between the masses and the classes.* The conflict between England and Germany is a conflict, on the one hand, between a nation which believes in political liberty and national autonomy, where the Press is free and where the rulers are responsible to public opinion, and, on the other hand, a nation where public opinion is still muzzled or powerless and where the masses are still under the heel of an absolute government, a reactionary party, a military Junkertum, and a despotic bureaucracy.

The root of the evil lies in the fact that in Germany the war spirit and the war caste still

prevail, and that a military Power like Prussia is the predominant partner in the German Confederation. The mischievous masterpiece of Carlyle on Frederick the Great, and his more mischievous letter to the *Times*, have misled English opinion as to the true character and traditions and aims of the Prussian monarchy. Prussia has been pre-eminently for two hundred years the military and reactionary State of Central Europe, much more so even than Russia. Prussia owes whatever she is, and whatever territory she has, to a systematic policy of cunning and deceit, of violence and conquest. No doubt she has achieved an admirable work of organization at home, and has fulfilled what was perhaps a necessary historic mission, but in her international relations she has been mainly a predatory Power. She has stolen her Eastern provinces from Poland. She is largely responsible for the murder of a great civilized nation. She has wrested Silesia from Austria. She has taken Hanover from its legitimate rulers. She has taken Schleswig-Holstein from Denmark, Alsace-Lorraine from France. And to-day the military caste in Prussia trust and hope that a final conflict with England will consummate what previous wars have so successfully accomplished in the past. They are all the more anxious to enter the lists and to run the hazards of war because it becomes more and more



difficult to govern a divided Reichstag and a dissatisfied people without uniting them against a foreign enemy, and because they realize that unless they restore their prestige and consolidate their power by a signal victory the days of their predominance are numbered.

Liberal publicists in this country ought to be the very last to fail to see the real points at issue and to ignore the fundamental fact that in Germany political aggressiveness abroad is explained by political reaction at home. It is perfectly true that England has no quarrel with the German people, that there has existed a hereditary alliance between the two nations, that they have fought side by side on many a battlefield, and that for generations the English people have paid ungrudgingly their tribute of admiration to the glorious achievements of the German people in philosophy and science, in literature and in music. But then the German people do not control the political situation. The German popular Press and the official Press Bureau of Mr. Hammann often do not even give them a chance to have the political problems brought before them. It is equally true that the assumption that war would benefit Germany is, to use the expression of Mr. Norman Angell in his epoch-making treatise, a "great illusion," and that the victor would certainly suffer as much as, or more than, the vanquished. But,

then, the ruling classes and the middle classes are suffering under that illusion, and even the masses themselves—with the doubtful exception of the Socialists—are actuated, not by their true interests, but by their passions artificially inflamed.

Instead of evading those fundamental facts just stated, let the English Liberals proclaim them from the housetops, so that the German and the British merchant, and the German and the British artisan may hear them. Let Liberal publicists strain every effort to enlighten German public opinion as well as English opinion. Let them proclaim that the remedy of the present situation lies not in the satisfaction of imaginary grievances, in the concession of "territorial compensation" at the expense of third parties, but in the establishment of popular government in the German Empire, and in the political education of the German people.

### III.

It may be objected by English readers that, not being a born Englishman, I am scarcely qualified to interfere in such an anxious and grave debate. On the contrary, I submit that it is precisely because I was born a Belgian that I

have perhaps a better chance to be listened to by the German public. The German public in its present mood will not listen to English writers, even as the British public distrusts German writers. Only last year Professor Delbrück refused to write for the *Contemporary Review* simply because Dr. Dillon was a regular contributor to that periodical, and because, according to the German professor, Dr. Dillon was poisoning the wells of public opinion in England.

Nor can I admit that, because I was born in Belgium, I ought to consider myself as a disinterested outsider with regard to the Anglo-German problem. It is true that in theory the neutrality of Belgium is guaranteed by international treaties; but when I observe the signs of the times, the ambitions of the German rulers, and when I consider such indications as the recent extension of strategic railways on the Belgian-German frontiers, I do not look forward with any feeling of security to future contingencies in the event of a European war. I am not at all convinced that the scare of a German invasion of England is justified. Indeed, I am inclined to believe the Germans when they assert that in case of war Germany would not be likely to invade Britain. She would be far more likely to invade Belgium, because Belgium has always been the pawn in the great game of European politics, and has

often been, and may again become, the battlefield and cockpit of Europe.

If, then, I cannot pretend that I am completely impartial in this controversy, I may at least say that I am writing as a true friend and admirer of the German people. Indeed, it is because I have learnt to admire the German people that I have also learnt to detest the Prussian spirit, which is the very negation of whatever is noblest and purest in the German genius. A Fleming by birth and a Dutchman by origin, I have perhaps as good a right to call myself a pure Teuton as most Nationalist Prussians who have an abundant admixture of Slav blood in their veins. I spoke a German dialect in the nursery. In my youth I nearly ruined my eyesight by reading Gothic script and German classics in those hideous editions, cheap and nasty, which have done so much to improve popular culture across the Rhine. I have revelled in German poetry, I have drunk at the fountain of German philosophy and theology. I may therefore claim to speak with some understanding and with genuine sympathy. A writer in the German *Kölnische Zeitung*, commenting on a previous essay of mine on a German topic, regrets that I should not have studied the subject in a more detached and objective spirit. I can only refer that German journalist to the judgment and ap-

preciation of my work which the greatest political writer of modern Germany, Professor Hans Delbrück, has expressed in a biographical notice of myself which appeared in the *Preussische Jahrbücher*. Nobody knows better than myself how little I deserve the too generous praise which Professor Delbrück has given to my political writings, but at least I can say this, that for twenty years I have studied the problems of international politics from personal observation, and in a spirit of disinterested research : "*Sine amore et odio quorum causas procul habeo.*"

And although I cannot lay claim to the very doubtful virtue of absolute intellectual impartiality and neutrality, I can at least say this, that I have done my utmost not to consider the problem from any English Nationalist point of view. I may assert in all honesty that I have not written this book in any narrow or insular spirit. I have tried to be what all educated Germans professed to be in the Golden Age of German philosophy or German literature. I have tried to be what the greatest German of all times—I mean, of course, Goethe, and not Count Zeppelin—has always claimed to be—namely, a Cosmopolitan, a good European ; and it is as a good European that I venture to ask for a fair hearing in both countries.

These personal explanations were necessary,

partly because I do not wish to compromise anybody but myself, and because I do not desire to be told that I am only expressing English prejudices ; partly because in such a delicate controversy the personal equation means a great deal. Admirers of Prussian despotism will no doubt make a determined effort to dispute my qualifications or my right to speak. I am not afraid of my political opponents, and I shall answer them in the words of Themistocles : " You may strike, if you will only listen." I shall not mind being attacked and hit hard, provided my arguments be listened to. The truth generally prevails, if there is no conspiracy of silence against it.

•



## INTRODUCTION.

EUROPE is drifting slowly but steadily towards an awful catastrophe which, if it does happen, will throw back civilization for the coming generation, as the war of 1870 threw back civilization for the generation which followed and which inherited its dire legacy of evil. For the last ten years two great Western Powers and two kindred races have become increasingly estranged, and have been engaging in military preparations which are taxing to the utmost the resources of the people, and are paralyzing social and political reform in both countries. A combination of many causes, moral and political, has bred suspicion and distrust, and the fallacious assumption of conflicting interests has turned suspicion into hatred. Only a year ago England and Germany stood on the brink of war. If after the *coup* of Agadir, Germany had persisted in her policy, the conflagration would have ensued, the storm would have burst out. The war cloud has temporarily lifted, but it has not passed away. The danger

is as acute as it was, because the causes which produced the recent outburst are still with us, and the malignant passions are gathering strength with each passing day.

This formidable evil is threatening England, but it does not originate in England, and England cannot be held responsible for it. The period of aggressive Imperialism has passed away. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain and Mr. Rudyard Kipling, in so far as they once represented the old bellicose Imperialism, to-day are exploded forces. The English people were never more peacefully inclined, and Liberals and Tories are united in their desire for a pacific solution of the present difficulties. In this respect an extraordinary change has come over England in the last ten years. In the wonderful age in which we are living, where the law of acceleration reveals itself in politics and economics as well as in science, more decisive events have taken place during the last decade than during the entire previous half century, and the English people have matured and advanced in political wisdom to an extent which few citizens realize. A cynic might object that if England to-day is less aggressive, it is because she is satiated and "saturated," because all the desirable places on the map of the world have already been painted red, and because the conquering Briton has taken up so much of the white man's burden that he is in need of a rest.

And he might further object that England to-day is so entirely absorbed in home affairs, and confronted with so many and such anxious internal problems, that she has neither time nor energy to spare for further Imperial expansion. The objection might seem plausible enough if history did not teach us that internal difficulties, so far from being an obstacle to external aggression, are often one of its main motives. Only too frequently have statesmen found a spirited foreign policy the line of least resistance in the solution of their domestic difficulties.

I therefore believe that the enthusiasm for social reform which to-day animates British statesmen, to whatever party they belong, is the best proof of a sincere desire on the part of the British nation to preserve the peace of the world.

But there are other causes which have contributed even more efficiently to produce the pacific temper of the English people. Both the Transvaal War and the Russo-Japanese War, with the frightful sacrifices they entailed, have had a sobering effect on the national mind, and have laid bare the dangers of aggressive Imperialism. On the other hand, the remarkable results achieved by the diplomacy of King Edward the Seventh have brought home the conviction that in the promotion of national interests more may be achieved by tact and sympathy than by brute

force. But, above all, the concession of complete autonomy to the Dutch-speaking South African peoples, the Constitution of the South African Commonwealth, the loyalty of the Dominion of Canada, and its rejection of the reciprocity treaty with the United States have had an inspiring effect on the mother country, and have strengthened her belief in the wisdom of a liberal and generous policy. England to-day has returned to her ancient traditions. The British people have outgrown the bonds of a narrow nationalism. In the political philosophy of the day, national patriotism has ceased to be an absolute category, an end in itself. Nationalism has become a relative category and a means to a higher end. The British Empire has become a world-wide federation of free, self-governing communities, including many different religions, but bound together by the same political ideal. The British Empire may be legitimately regarded as the most decisive experiment in liberal statesmanship in the world's history, the most effective power for good in world politics, the most convincing proof that an unswerving respect for the political rights of the people is the strongest bond of unity and loyalty, that order is compatible with liberty, and that the conflicting claims of nationality can be and must be reconciled with the claims of humanity. In past ages the idea of empire has always been associated with the idea

of despotism. It is the unique glory of the British Empire that it is indissolubly associated with and synonymous with political liberty. As England has been the *alma mater* of representative government, so will the British Empire be the perfect type and exemplar of all free commonwealths, of all future federations of civilized communities, the nearest approach to that federation of humanity which has been the philosopher's stone of human statesmanship.

For the reasons which I have just stated, the pacific intentions of the English people to-day cannot be disputed, and for those self-same reasons we cannot accept the theory that England is quite as responsible as Germany for the present situation. We cannot admit that Germany is justified in saying, "We are preparing for war because we dread an attack from England," just as much as the English people think themselves justified in saying, "We are preparing for war because we dread an attack from Germany." If our interpretation of the significance of the British Empire is not a hollow phrase, the English people have actually broken through that vicious circle, and the conclusion must force itself upon any impartial observer that in the present crisis the danger does not come from England, but that it undoubtedly does originate in Germany.



It is Germany and not England which is the storm-centre, the volcanic zone, in international politics. From there have come, ever since 1860, the tension and friction, the suspicion and distrust. It is there that the pagan gods of the Nibelungen are forging their deadly weapons. I admit that it is impossible from the very outset of our inquiry to establish a conviction which necessarily can only be reached at the conclusion of our argument, but I hope and trust that in the present volume we shall provide sufficient cumulative evidence to convince even the most sceptical. In this opening chapter we shall only dispose of a few preliminary objections, and answer a few previous questions proposed by those candid critics who at the beginning of our investigation would be inclined to dispute the reality of the danger against which we are seeking to protect ourselves, or by those critics who would deny the very existence of the problem of which we are seeking a solution.

Many English and German publicists try to reassure us by telling us that the present Anglo-German peril is only a passing phenomenon, and that with sufficient goodwill and patience we shall soon see the end of it. "*Deus dabit his quoque finem.*" They tell us that the present situation is mainly created by mutual misunderstandings, and that those misunderstandings are only too easily explained, in the first place, by the



almost universal ignorance of the two nations concerning each other's difficulties and characteristics, and, in the second place, by the peculiar psychology of the crowd, and by the mischievous workings of a Yellow Press bent on increasing its circulation by spreading sensational reports and inflaming popular passion.

I am quite prepared to make full allowance for national ignorance and national prejudice. To restrict my criticism to the English public, I fully admit that the ignorance of the English people concerning their German cousins is prodigious. When we find that the study of the German language—that is to say, of a language which is the key to a glorious literature as well as the chief means of establishing business relations with one of the great commercial Powers of the world—is almost “taboo” in every English public school and university, owing to the inconceivable pedantry and narrow-mindedness of educational authorities ;\* when we find that in the whole of the Scottish universities there does not

\* Lord Haldane is a great expert in German literature and German philosophy. He is Chancellor of one British university, and has been Lord Rector of another, and he is keenly interested in educational reform. But I am not aware that either he or any other statesman has ever attempted to do anything to counteract the imbecile policy of the educational authorities and to encourage the study of German. In contrasting the intellectual relations of England and Germany we are reminded of the relative position of the French people and of the German people before the outbreak of the war of 1870. The Germans knew everything about the French, the French knew little or nothing of the Germans.

exist one chair of German language and literature, and that in the university of Cambridge it has been left to the munificence of a Teutonic merchant to make adequate provision for the teaching of German ; when we find that a knowledge of Greek, only attainable by a small minority, and a smattering of Greek forced upon the vast majority of English schoolboys are considered more important than a practical mastery of the German language, which ought to be placed within the reach of every pupil ; when we find that ninety-five per cent. of the members of the House of Commons, whose first duty it should be to know at first hand the conditions which prevail in Germany, to keep in touch with the German Press, and with German public opinion, are incapable of reading a German newspaper ; when we find that the most popular English paper of the day recently sent out a correspondent to follow the German elections, who naïvely admitted that he did not understand a word of German ; when we see such an extraordinary state of things I am only too ready to admit that nothing that can be said about the ignorance of the British public can possibly be too strong, and I feel it my duty to proclaim that the educational authorities who allow such a scandal to continue are guilty of an almost criminal neglect of duty, and that they must be held primarily responsible for a great deal of the

intellectual misunderstanding that exists between the two nations.\*

But however deplorable that ignorance may be, however much it may have contributed in the past to mutual differences, and however dangerous it might prove in case of a war, I do not think that it can account for the present crisis; and I am driven to that conclusion by the simple reflection that the feeling of hostility is so much less acute and the attitude of depreciation is so much less marked in England, where the ignorance of German is almost universal, than in Germany, where the educated classes do possess a knowledge of the English language.

Nor can it be said that the "psychology of the crowd" in both countries must be held mainly responsible for the existing situation. With regard to the German crowd I am ready to admit that ample allowance must be made for the animal spirits of a young and growing nation, especially when its rulers find it to their advantage to turn the popular mind away from the consideration of their own political shortcomings, in order to unite them against an imaginary

\* In the face of that ignorance, which is accepted by every legislator, how contemptible must appear the gushing cant about the admirable results of interparliamentary visits and conferences! It must be no doubt infinitely less troublesome to attend parliamentary banquets and to indulge in fraternal potations and to intone the *Gaudeamus igitur* than to fight for a reform of our effete educational system.

enemy. And I know full well that the whole history of the nineteenth century presents a lamentable record of similar periodical outbursts of national animosity. Thus France was the "hereditary enemy" of England before she became her ally. Thus Germany and Austria were "hereditary enemies," and fought a bitter war before they became loyal friends. Thus England was the "inveterate enemy" of Russia; thus it was thought that the occupation of Merv, a sterile oasis on the Persian frontier, must be a *casus belli*, and thus England was subject to periodical fits of "*Mervousness*" and "*nervousness*" before she became united to the Slav Empire in an *Entente Cordiale*. But the present misunderstanding between England and Germany is a different phenomenon. It cannot be traced to sudden gusts of popular passion. It cannot be explained by conflicting interests. It cannot be explained by racial differences, for they are kindred races. It cannot be explained by religious differences, for both England and Germany are Protestant rather than Catholic countries. It cannot be explained by any hereditary hostility, for in the past England and Germany have never fought against each other on a battlefield. On the contrary, they have often fought as allies against a common foe. The causes of the present animosity, therefore, lie deeper, and no shallow phrases about the "passing moods of

the people," or the "psychology of the crowd," can be accepted as a solution of the difficulty.

Nor do I think that the popular Press can be held responsible to any large extent for the Anglo-German peril. I admit that the Yellow Press has often made it a matter of business, and sometimes a remunerative business, to stir up ill-feeling amongst nations. But in the present case the newspapers have not created the ill-feeling ; they only gave expression to a feeling which already existed. In this connection it must be noted that in Germany anti-British hostility is by no means restricted to the Yellow Press. Any one acquainted with the German Press will know that a Conservative paper like the *Kreuzzeitung* or a National Liberal journal like the *Preussische Jahrbücher* are almost as aggressive in tone as a frankly Nationalist paper like the *Zukunft*.

German and English publicists, whilst admitting the existence of a feeling of hostility, point out the many unmistakable signs of goodwill heralding a better understanding in the future. They point to the frequent exchange of international courtesies, to the periodical visits of Members of Parliament and of representative men of the Churches ; they point to the visit of Viscount Haldane ; and last, but not least, they point to the many pacific assurances of the German Kaiser. With regard to the utterances of the



Kaiser, I can only say that if the Kaiser has made many pacific speeches, his aggressive speeches have been even more numerous. I have no doubt that the Kaiser is perfectly sincere, and I believe him to be animated with the most cordial feelings for this country. If I am asked to explain the contradiction, I can only see one explanation, and it is not one which I am very willing to admit. And the explanation is this: when he is expressing words of peace and goodwill he is speaking in his own private capacity and as the grandson of an English queen. On the contrary, whenever he utters words of ill-will and menace, whenever he waves the flag, when he shows the mailed fist, he is acting as the representative and speaking as the spokesman of a considerable fraction amongst his subjects.

That there has existed in Germany a very widespread feeling of hostility against the English people we have uncontrovertible proof. And the evidence we have on no less an authority than the Kaiser himself. In the famous interview published by the *Daily Telegraph*, William the Second emphatically testified to the existence and to the persistence of the feeling which he had systematically attempted to counteract. The admission raised legitimate indignation in Germany. It was ill-advised. It was calculated to intensify the very animosity which it deprecated. But the fact itself, the existence of



the animosity, could not be disputed. After all, the Kaiser ought to know the feelings, if not of the majority of his subjects, at least of those ruling classes with whom he comes in contact.

And therefore no reassuring interviews or utterances, even of an Anglophile Kaiser, can blind us to the significance of recent events. The signs of the times are too clear to leave us in any doubt with regard to the state of the popular mind in Germany. In England and Germany the public men of all parties and of no party, publicists of every colour and of no colour, interpret those signs in exactly the same way. When we hear in England leading Socialists like Mr. Blatchford and Mr. Hyndman, eminent Positivists like Mr. Frederic Harrison, apostles of peace like Mr. Norman Angell, all warning us that we stand on the brink of an abyss; when we hear in Germany the leader of the National Liberal Party, Mr. Basserman, the leader of the Conservative Party, Mr. von Heydebrand, the leader of the Progressive Party, the Rev. Friedrich Naumann, men divided on many political problems but united in their suspicion of England, when we hear those men deliver inflammatory speeches in the Reichstag; when the guarded and dignified speech of an English Cabinet Minister, who has always been known for his pro-German sympathies, has been distorted in Germany into

a challenge of war, and has called forth such extraordinary speeches as those of Mr. von Heydebrand ; when we see the most eminent German publicist, Professor Hans Delbrück of the University of Berlin, a Liberal and a friend of England, actually refusing to write a peaceful declaration for the *Contemporary Review*, because, in his opinion, such a declaration could not serve any useful purpose in the present excited state of public opinion ; when we see the most influential journalist of the German Empire, Maximilian Harden, who is not only a writer of brilliant talent and immense learning, but who has the keen Semitic instinct for what appeals to the public, proclaiming again and again that things cannot go on any longer as they are, and month after month calling for the arbitrament of war, and repeating in the *Zukunft* his fateful burden, "*Ceterum censeo Carthaginem esse delendam* ;" when we see the German Crown Prince, who is no longer an impulsive and immature youth, but a responsible man of thirty, widely travelled, and with considerable political experience, frantically applauding violent anti-British outbursts in the Reichstag, and being made into a popular hero for doing so ; when, finally, we see that the German Emperor himself is being proclaimed a very apostle of peace merely because he courageously refuses to inflame the warlike passions ; when we see the Kaiser,

may even the war lord of Europe, being publicly derided and reviled for his pacific intentions, and when that glorious appellation, "*William the Peaceful*," has become a nickname and is turned into an insult ; when we can observe all those concurrent symptoms, surely we have a right to conclude that the international situation has indeed become one of imminent peril.

Uninfluenced by those ominous signs of the times, English and German optimists still refuse to surrender, still persist in their optimism. They argue that the situation is no doubt serious, but that those outbursts of popular feeling in Germany, violent as they are, have largely been caused by English suspicion and distrust, and that there has been nothing in the German policy to justify that English suspicion and distrust. After all, deeds are more important than words, and by her deeds Germany has proved for forty-two years that she is persistently pacific. Since 1870 Russia has made war against Turkey and against Japan. England has made war against the Transvaal. Italy has waged war against Turkey. France after Fashoda would have declared war against England, and after Tangier would have declared war against Germany, if France had been prepared. Of all the great Powers, Germany alone for nearly half a century has been determined to keep the peace of the world.

The reply to this objection is very simple. I am not examining here whether a state of affairs which has transformed Europe into an armed camp of six million soldiers, and which absorbs for military expenditure two-thirds of the revenue of European states, can be appropriately called a state of peace. It is certainly not a *pax romana*. It is most certainly not a *pax britannica*. It may be a *pax teutonica* or rather a *pax borussica*, but such as it is, ruinous and demoralizing, it is also lamentably precarious and perilously unstable. And if Germany has kept this *pax borussica* for forty-two years, it has not been the fault of the German Government. Rather has it been kept because she has been prevented from declaring war by outside interference ; or because she has been able to carry out her policy and to achieve her ambitions without going the length of declaring war, or because a war would have been not only a heinous crime but a political blunder.

After 1870 Bismarck twice prepared to deal a deadly blow to France, because France was rapidly recovering from her wounds and reorganizing her army. It was only the Russian intervention which prevented the Iron Chancellor from carrying out his plans. I am aware that some of the facts have been disputed. Such international differences generally are twisted and distorted, but the main facts of the

Franco-German incidents of 1875 remain beyond cavil and dispute.\* And it is highly significant that quite recently a great German scholar, Professor Karl Lamprecht of Leipzig University,† in the conclusion of the nineteenth volume of his monumental history, should still cynically deplore and regret that in 1875 Germany should have missed a great opportunity and should not have fulfilled her destiny.

Again, only four years ago, there was a danger of an outbreak of war when Austria, supported by Germany, annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina in flagrant violation of the Treaty of Berlin. War would no doubt have been declared if Russia had been prepared for it, if she had had time to recover from Moukden and Tsusima.

But the real reason why Germany for forty years has kept the peace is because a war would have been both fatal and futile, injurious and superfluous. It would have been injurious, for it would have arrested the growing trade and the expanding industries of the empire. And, above all, it would have been superfluous, for in time of peace Germany reaped all the advantages which a successful war would have

\* See the instructive revelations in the Memoirs of Sir Robert Morier, who was English Ambassador in Berlin.

† It is noticeable that one of the leaders of the Pan-Germanists, Ernst Hasse, was also a professor of Leipzig University. In Professor Lamprecht he has made a brilliant convert who is a host by himself.



given her. For twenty-five years the German Empire wielded an unchallenged supremacy on the continent of Europe. For twenty years she directed the course of international events.

But since the opening of the twentieth century Germany has ceased to be paramount, she has ceased to control European policy at her own sweet will, and weaker States have ceased to be given over to her tender mercies. To the Triple Alliance has been opposed the Triple Entente. The balance of power has been re-established. The three "hereditary enemies"—England, France, and Russia—have joined hands, and have delivered Europe from the incubus of German suzerainty. German diplomacy has strained every effort to break the Triple Entente, in turn wooing and threatening France and Russia, keeping open the Moroccan sore as the Neapolitan *lazzarone* keeps open the wound which ensures his living, and finally challenging the naval supremacy of England, and preparing to become as powerful at sea as she is on the Continent.

And here we come to *one of the crucial points* of the Anglo-German controversy—the naval policy of the German Empire. I advisedly said *ONE* of the crucial points, for it is by no means the only one, nor even, in my opinion, the most important one. As I shall presently endeavour to prove, *if Germany suddenly*



*decided to reduce her naval armaments and to increase her army in proportion, England would have even more serious reasons for anxiety than she has at present.*

Still there can be no doubt that for the present it is the naval policy of Germany which is the immediate cause of English alarm. England assumes that if Germany builds a powerful navy, that navy is mainly directed against her. It is built with the purpose of wresting from her the mastery of the sea. Unless we assume such a motive, it is impossible to account for the colossal effort which Germany is making. The German people would not willingly bear the double burden of a formidable naval expenditure added to their formidable expenditure on the army, they would not submit to a chronic deficit, if they did not think that the prize which is at stake was worth any effort and sacrifice on their part. Such is the obvious and anxious question which presents itself to the English mind, and I do not think that any official German explanation hitherto given is at all adequate or calculated to set at rest the public opinions of England. Without in the least questioning the abstract right of the German people to build any navy they choose, I am merely concerned to inquire whether the ostensible reasons given can supply us with an adequate motive for her naval policy.

We are told that Germany has widely scattered colonies to protect, that she has world-wide commercial interests to defend, and that important changes may suddenly arise in different parts of the world which might render a powerful navy indispensable. For instance, the Chinese Empire or the Turkish Empire might break up, and Germany must be in a position to speak out in no uncertain voice, and to assert her legitimate claims. All the great Powers of the world—England, France, Russia, the United States, Japan—have built up colonial empires. Why should Germany not follow their example whenever she has a chance, and whenever a favourable juncture of events affords a favourable opportunity?

At first sight the contention of Germany seems reasonable enough, but on closer examination it is found to be without foundation, and to provide an absolutely inadequate motive for her present naval policy. Germany, merely to protect her commercial interests, does not need a powerful navy. She does not need a navy to fight the Herreros or the South Sea Islanders. And to defend her political interests in any part of the world, her formidable position as a continental Power would be sufficient to protect her against any wanton attack or any unwarranted infringement of her rights.

It cannot be sufficiently emphasized in this

question of naval armaments that the position of England and Germany is radically different, and that in the two countries the army and the navy must serve two totally different purposes.

Under present conditions of international relations, as a continental Power, Germany needs no powerful navy but needs a powerful army. In at least one definite sense it may be said that to Germany the army is essentially defensive, whilst the navy is mainly offensive. On the contrary, England, as an insular and maritime Power, needs no mighty army but needs a mighty navy. In the same special sense to England the navy is essentially the defensive weapon, whilst a big army would be an offensive weapon. To put the position and mutual relationship more clearly: if to-morrow England started raising a powerful army of 500,000 soldiers, assuming that it could not conceivably be directed against France and Russia, but that it could only be used in alliance with France or Russia in a joint attack against Germany, Germany would legitimately take alarm; and she would naturally argue that England would not make such tremendous sacrifices merely to send out an eventual punitive expedition to Nigeria or China. She would assume that England was preparing for an attack on Germany. And just in the same way when Germany is adding

to her formidable army a formidable navy, which could only be used against England, she cannot wonder if her naval policy gives rise to the gravest apprehensions and if the English people draw the inevitable inference that Germany, if not indeed contemplating an immediate attack, is at least preparing for such an eventuality, when she judges that its necessity has arisen.

Although the existence of any ultimate aggressive design against England has been again and again officially denied, it has now been admitted by responsible ministers in the Reichstag. It is true that it is still expressed euphemistically and in a disguised form. We are told that the German navy must be sufficiently strong to inspire respect in the English people, so that even England must think twice before she dares to attack Germany. Since the outburst of popular indignation caused by the recent events of Agadir, some German writers go much further and frankly confess that they can see no reason why Germany should not challenge the maritime supremacy of England, and they suggest that there is no natural or divine law which gives to the English people for all time to come the mastery of the sea.

To this German contention the English people reply that there does exist a natural

law, or, if we prefer, an economic law, which compels them to retain the mastery of the sea. It is not merely the protection of her empire, it is not even mainly the protection of her oversea trade, which makes sea power an absolute necessity for England. There was a time when Britain ruled the waves mainly for reasons of empire and colonial expansion, but to-day, even if England entirely surrendered any maritime ambitions, even if she gave up every one of her colonies, she would have all the more need to retain command of the sea, because on it depends not only her existence as an empire, but her existence as a nation. If she lost her sea power the daily food supply of her citizens would be at the mercy of any hostile fleet. In a few weeks the English people might be starved into submission and servitude, even though her soldiers might win another battle of Waterloo on the Continent.

We are told, it is true, that an invasion of England is impossible, and the mere impossibility or even improbability of such an invasion ought to dispose of any suspicions of German aggressive designs. We are told that naval experts have proved, and recent events in the Tripoli war have confirmed, that any German attempt suddenly to mobilize and to transport an army corps from the German to the English

shores would present almost insuperable difficulties, and would leave an English army ample time to meet the attack.

I am not qualified to deal with the technical argument, but it is not necessary to be an expert to realize that naval strategy has many surprises; that the element of chance and luck plays an even more important part in naval than in continental warfare; and, above all, that modern inventions, hitherto almost untried, may revolutionize the naval battles of to-morrow. No expert can calculate or foretell the probable course of a naval campaign. It is true that an "Invincible Armada" to-day would be less at the mercy of the waves; but she still remains at the mercy of other forces which are equally incalculable and uncontrollable. We do not know whether even a formidable superiority in Dreadnoughts would be decisive. Even as the sinking of one or two ships might block the Kiel Canal, so the explosion of a few mines might blow up several Dreadnoughts at the very beginning of the campaign and thus determine the issue of a war. Such an explosion actually did blow up part of the Russian fleet before Port Arthur, and decided the whole course of events. Nor must we forget that within the near future another fleet may play an important part in the final result—namely, the new fleet of aeroplanes which to-morrow may entirely change



the conditions of both continental and naval warfare. Germany might conceivably send an aerial army of several thousand aeroplanes to the English capital, which might work more havoc than an invading army corps. One thing is certain, that if aero-technics make as rapid progress in the next five years as they have done within the last decade, England, for military purposes, will have ceased to be an island.

But let us assume that the invasion scare is totally unfounded. Personally I am inclined to think that the fear of a German invasion has haunted far too exclusively the imagination of the English people, and has diverted their attention from another danger far more real and far more immediate. With characteristic *naïveté* and insular selfishness some jingoes imagine that if only the naval armaments of Germany could be stopped, all danger to England would be averted. But surely the greatest danger to England is not the invasion of England : it is the invasion of France and Belgium. For in the case of an invasion of England, even the Germans admit that the probabilities of success would all be against Germany ; whilst in the case of an invasion of France, the Germans claim that the probabilities are all in their favour. It is therefore in France and Belgium that the vulnerable point lies, the Achilles heel of the British Empire.

The German navy might eventually be useful to keep England in check, but, after all, the decisive weapon of attack is the German army, and the German people have only been prevented by their Anglophobia and megalomania from seeing this. In the past the battles of England have been mainly fought on the Continent, and so they will be in the future. A crushing defeat of France in the plains of Flanders or Champagne, with the subsequent annexation of Northern Belgium and of Holland, would be a deadly blow to English supremacy. Well may the British people cling to the French *entente* as a *Versicherungsvertrag*, and the sooner that *entente* is transformed into an alliance the better for England.

The real point at issue, therefore, is not whether Germany could risk or intends to risk an invasion of England, but whether she nourishes ambitions and aspirations which could only be satisfied at the conclusion of a successful war, or which, if satisfied without the arbitrament of war, would reduce England to a negligible quantity in European politics. That Germany at present nourishes such ambitions and aspirations is obvious to any student who keeps in close touch with German public opinion. Germany is not satisfied with her present boundaries. She does not only ask for the open door which England has generously given her.

She does not only aspire to commercial expansion. She is bent on territorial expansion. She is bent on being not merely a German Empire, but a European Empire, and a World Empire. The old Napoleonic dream is with us once more. Already Austria, far more useful as a loyal ally than if she were annexed, is opening for Germany the gates of the East and colonizing the south of Europe. Already the Dual Alliance is politically supreme from Hamburg to Salonica and Constantinople. Already the economic penetration of Germany and Holland and Belgium has transformed those countries into German economic dependencies. The political supremacy of the German Empire in continental Europe seems, therefore, within reach of immediate practical politics. And for such a prize ought not every subject of the Kaiser be ready to make any sacrifice?

There lies the danger in the immediate future, and the danger is drawing near. Germany is in no hurry. She can resist, and she will resist, popular pressure until she is ready. Time is working for her. And as Admiral Mahan recently reminded us, despotism, which is the curse of Germany in time of peace, may become in time of war an element of strength, for it ensures unity of purpose, concentration of energy, and discipline.

And let us not imagine that the danger has been indefinitely postponed through the con-

clusion of the treaty with France and the solution of the Moroccan crisis. Indeed, no solution has been attained. France has submitted to a national humiliation, and has been bullied into accepting ignominious conditions and into conceding to Germany a not unimportant part of her colonial empire. Her statesmen have justified that retrocession of French territory on the plea that it was worth a considerable sacrifice to come to a "final understanding" with Germany on the African question, and to put an end once for all to the Moroccan imbroglio. Incredible though it seems, moderate and responsible German publicists now tell us with grim humour that whilst France has been threatened into surrendering a great deal, she has obtained nothing in return. We are told in the most explicit terms by Dr. Daniels and by Professor Delbrück that the Moroccan question remains an open question, that France has been taken in, that Germany has made no concession, and that the position of Germany in Morocco under the recent treaty conditions is stronger than it was under the Treaty of Algeciras.

Every English reader will agree that such weighty utterances are painful reading. It is an ominous indication of the state of German opinion to be told both by the successor of Treitschke in the university of Berlin and by the foreign editor of the *Preussische Jahrbücher*

that they expect that before two years are over "sufficient inflammable material will have accumulated in Morocco to produce a conflagration." It is painful to read that having just emerged from a dangerous crisis we shall be confronted within twenty-four months with another crisis infinitely more dangerous. For is it not obvious that if the German Government within two years were once more to reopen the Moroccan question, and once more came forward with fresh claims for territorial compensation, those claims could only be settled by war. And in my opinion there never would have been in European history a more criminal war on the part of Germany, and a more just war on the part of France.

Such German statements as I have just alluded to need no discussion or amplification. Nor do I think that it is necessary to say anything more to prove my argument and to drive home the conviction that the Anglo-German peril is not a vain delusion, that it is real, and that it is pressing. I may also claim that I have satisfactorily proved my contention that the peril does not originate in England or France, but that it originates with the German people themselves. I shall have to consider in the following chapters how that Anglo-German peril can best be met. I shall examine whether any of the current solutions proposed

can be accepted as a final settlement of the difficulty, and, if no such solution can be accepted, whether it is possible to suggest any other remedy which would cure the international political malady.



# THE ANGLO-GERMAN PROBLEM.

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## WHY DOES EUROPE DISTRUST GERMANY?

### I.

ONE of the most striking features of contemporary politics is the tragic moral isolation of Germany. Considered individually, few people are more deserving of sympathy, are more genial, more unassuming, more delightfully simple. Yet collectively the Germans have few friends and many enemies. At the International Conference of Algéciras, specially convened at the request of Germany, the German representatives stood confronted with the almost unanimous hostility of the great Powers of the world.\* Even the United States, notwithstanding the pressure of twenty millions of

\* See A. Tardieu's "La Conférence d'Algésiras."

Americans of German descent, stood faithfully by France, and although Austria was thanked by the Kaiser for having been the "loyal second" of her German allies, we must not forget that by none are the German people more cordially hated than by the Slav, Magyar, and Roumanian nations which form the majority of the Austrian Empire.

Nor is the feeling of antipathy to Germany restricted to the great Powers. Even in those countries which, like Belgium, Holland, and Switzerland, have benefited most from the expansion of German trade, the Teutons to-day are as unpopular as the French or the English are popular. And this unpopularity reflects itself in the attitude almost universally prevalent with regard to the German language and literature. Whilst German commerce is increasing by leaps and bounds, the moral and intellectual influence of German culture is steadily diminishing. It is infinitely less than it was fifty years ago, when Germany was a second-rate Power. It is less than that of Russia or even Belgium or Norway. There is not one contemporary German writer who exerts anything like the influence which Tolstoy or Ibsen or Maeterlinck wields in contemporary thought. Whilst the French language is becoming more and more the international language of the educated classes on the Continent, the German language is almost universally

neglected, notwithstanding its obvious practical uses. In some countries, like Bohemia, it is actually "taboo."

Even the Germans cannot refuse to see this growing hostility which confronts them everywhere, and they are compelled to suggest various theories to account for it.\* German critics tell us that in France the anti-German feeling is due to the bitter memories left by the war of 1870: it is the Gallic vindictiveness born of defeat. In England it is due to commercial rivalry and to a natural envy at the growing prosperity of the empire. In all countries the antipathy to Germany is mainly the instinctive dread of the weak before the strong. Let us examine briefly if those explanations are sufficient to account for the universal feelings of dislike and distrust which Germany inspires at the present day.

In France it is only too obvious that the Franco-German War has left ineffaceable memories behind it. But the very persistence of those memories is a phenomenon which demands explanation. For it is one of the strangest and one of the noblest features of human nature that, as a rule, war leaves no permanent bitterness behind it. It has often happened, even

\* See Harden's lamentations in the *Zukunft* (September 1911): "*Uns lebt kein Freund auf der weiten Erde*"—"We have no friend in the wide world."

after a long and bitter war, that enemies have drawn nearer together, having learned to respect each other on the battlefield. During the Seven Years' War the French sustained grievous defeats, yet Frederick the Great was almost popular after Rossbach. The battle of Leipzig was a crushing disaster to the French arms, yet Alexander the First, when he entered Paris in 1814, was the cynosure of all eyes and the hero of the Parisian mob. The English people and the French have been for centuries hereditary enemies, yet from the days of Crécy to the days of Waterloo never has defeat rankled long in the minds of the people, and the conclusion of peace has generally been the signal in France for an outburst of acute Anglomania. Even the humiliation of Fashoda has not prevented, a few years later, the conclusion of the *Entente Cordiale*. The history of many a battle between France and England reads like the description of a tournament between the heroes of mediæval chivalry, and the preliminary courtesies of Fontenoy—" *Tirez les premiers, messieurs les Français ;* " " *Après vous, messieurs les Anglais* "—are characteristic of many an encounter between the two nations.

The Franco-German War stands alone in modern history as one which has left behind it ineradicable feelings of hatred and revenge. The chivalry of European tradition was conspicuously absent in the conduct of that war.

The victor hurled against the vanquished an implacable "*Væ victis!*" He chose to violate that great principle of nationalities which has become the foundation of the political morality of Europe. In an age of democracy he chose to dispose of the destinies of millions of French people without their consent. He chose to treat the Alsacians and Lorrains as if they were so many pawns in the grim *Kriegspiel*, so many slaves to be transferred from one owner to another.

It is not relevant to our purpose to examine how far Bismarck was justified in his policy. We are only trying to explain the feelings which that policy has evoked in France towards Germany. Nor must we forget that the explanation of bitter memories and of a feeling of revenge for wrongs endured only applies to France. It certainly does not apply to the relations between Germany and England. The Germans and the English have never fought against each other in the past. Rather have they fought side by side. There is no historical quarrel between the two nations, unless a patriotic German historian were to rise some day and use as a grievance against England that Wellington has deprived Blücher of the glory and the laurels of Waterloo.

To explain the antipathy felt towards Germany shall we fall back on commercial rivalry as the final explanation? Even that explanation

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will not hold. Commercial rivalry at the present day may produce discomfort and anxiety. Between civilized nations it does not produce hatred, unless the rivalry be manifestly unfair and dishonest.

Twenty years ago the English people may have resented German competition because they actually did consider it unfair, and not without some plausible reasons. German trade originally ousted English trade from many markets because conditions were not equal, because the standard of living was lower in Germany, because wages and profits were smaller and hours longer, and because the goods "made in Germany" were often a cheap and nasty imitation of British goods. The British workman may have legitimately felt towards the German artisan something of the feeling which a Trade Unionist workman feels towards a "blackleg" who accepts lower pay and does not play the game. And the English feeling seemed all the more justified because, whilst Germany raised a tariff wall keeping out English goods, England kept her doors open and allowed the German Protected Trade to grow and expand under the sunshine of British Free Trade.

But the days of unreasonable British resentment and of depreciation of their rivals have now long passed away. If originally the British manufacturer may have shown an undue ten-



dency to attribute German expansion to unfair methods of competition, he has long ago ceased to underrate the splendid qualities of his commercial rivals. Indeed to-day the English nation seems rather to err on the other side, and to unduly extol the superiority of German methods. To-day the Englishman admits, like a sportsman, that where he is being beaten, he is beaten in a fair game. He admits that the average German works harder, that he is better trained, that he shows greater adaptability to the needs of his customers, that he possesses a better knowledge of foreign countries and foreign languages. The praise of German qualities and German attainments is to-day the burden of every British Consular report.

We must therefore repeat that commercial rivalry, if it may cause grave anxiety, does not produce, and has not produced, mutual dislike or mutual depreciation. And even if we were inclined to explain the estrangement between England and Germany by commercial rivalry, that explanation would not apply to other countries, like Belgium and Holland and Denmark, where Germany is equally unpopular. Belgium and Holland, so far from suffering from German expansion, have prospered in consequence of that expansion—two-thirds of the trade credited to Belgium and Holland are really German transit trade—yet the anti-German feel-

ing is even stronger in those small countries than it is in England, and a Flemish-speaking Belgian will only learn German under absolute compulsion. It may be that those small countries are imbued with a salutary terror of German political supremacy. It may be that Belgium and Holland and Denmark are dreading to be politically absorbed. But here again the instinct of self-preservation alone is not sufficient to explain the antipathy which those nations feel towards their mighty neighbour. The same dread existed in Belgium under Napoleon the Third; yet if France was feared as a government, it did not inspire any feelings of antipathy and much less any feelings of hatred. During the last generation England was on several occasions a controlling factor in world politics, yet, with the exception of a brief period during the Boer War, the English people have never been generally unpopular.

The truth is that none of the causes which we have just examined—neither the bitter memories of past wars, nor commercial rivalry, nor the dread of political absorption—are sufficient to explain the universal distrust and dislike which other nations feel towards Germany.

Those causes indeed seem inadequate to the German publicists themselves. So startling and so widespread does this antipathy appear even to German observers that in order to explain it

they have been compelled to imagine a malignant and universal conspiracy against the German people. Even as French historians used to be always looking out for some traitor or some scapegoat in order to explain a national defeat—Ganelon, Bourbon, Villeneuve, Dupont, Bazaine, Dreyfus—even so German historians to-day assume that their enemies have organized an Anti-German Trust to hem in and to isolate the German people. It is a generally accepted assumption in Germany that King Edward the Seventh was the arch-plotter in this European conspiracy, and this is one of the many imaginary grievances of Germany against England.

As we shall discuss the grievance in a subsequent chapter, we need not pause to consider it here. We need only mention it as an illustration of the remarkable psychology which is to-day prevalent in the German people ; and it will be more to the purpose if we proceed at once to examine and to discuss the real and deep-seated reasons which account for the feelings which the German people inspire in other nations.

## II.

The inherent qualities of the German race and an extraordinary conjuncture of favourable circumstances have raised the German people to

a position of political supremacy and commercial prosperity which have exceeded their wildest dreams, and this startling accession of wealth and power after centuries of humiliation have developed to an inordinate degree self-conceit and self-assertion. We need not judge the German harshly on that account. All young nations have passed through those political measles. If to-day that disease is more virulent in Germany, it is because German greatness is more recent and has been more sudden. Politically and economically the Germans are the "parvenus" and upstarts of Europe, and they suffer from exactly those shortcomings which characterize the *parvenu*—vanity, vulgarity, and aggressiveness. The Germans have not had time to acquire that grace and tactfulness which have generally prevented French patriotism from being offensive to others. Neither have they acquired that reticence and reserve which have generally characterized the English. It almost seems as if the German people themselves were amazed and dazed by the startling contrast between their former and their present fortunes, and a benevolent critic might almost assert that their present elation is a sign of an unconscious and instinctive humility.

Whatever may be the cause of the state of mind of the Germans, they are certainly suffering just now from acute "megalomania." The

abnormal self-conceit, the inflated national consciousness, express themselves in a thousand ways, some of which are naïve and harmless, whilst others are grossly offensive. They show themselves in a craving for titles and in gaudy and tasteless public buildings ; \* in the thousand and one statues of Bismarck and William the First ; they reveal themselves in the articles of journalists and in the writings of historians ; but above all, the German megalomania finds expression in the seven thousand speeches and in the three hundred uniforms of the Kaiser. In examining the influence of William the Second we shall come to the conclusion that it is his defects far more than his virtues that have made him the representative hero of the German people. His winged words voice the aspirations of his subjects. Like the Kaiser, every German believes that he is "the salt of the earth"—"*Wir sind das Salz der Erde.*" Like Nietzsche, the modern German believes that the world must be ruled by a super-man, and that he is the super-man. Like Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the German is convinced that he belongs to a super-race, and that the Teuton has been the master-builder of European civilization.

National self-appreciation does not necessarily imply depreciation of the foreigner. Even the most extravagant patriotism of the French people

\* See an amusing article, "Ornamente," in the *Zukunft*.



has rarely prevented them from doing justice to the qualities of their neighbours. All through the nineteenth century every representative French writer—Michelet, Taine, Renan, Quinet—has glorified the virtues of the German race and the achievements of its thinkers and artists. In the heyday of Napoleonic tyranny Madame de Staël published her classical treatise, “*De l’Allemagne*,” the most generous tribute ever paid to German genius. During the horrors of the Franco-German War Victor Hugo in “*l’Année Terrible*” continued to extol German thought and German art; whereas, on the other side of the Rhine, historians like Mommsen and Treitschke were reviling the Gaul and trampling on the vanquished.

Nor have the English people lagged behind the French in their recognition of German culture. Ever since Coleridge, with all their insularity, they have done justice to Germany, all the more sincerely, perhaps, the less they knew about her. For several generations the English people have tried to assimilate German philosophy: they have translated German theologians and higher critics; they have welcomed to their universities German professors, like Max Müller. It is not too much to say that from the beginning of the nineteenth century there has been a continuous German tradition in English literature. With Carlyle



and De Quincey, with Froude and Freeman, with Kingsley and Seeley, that tradition, whilst underrating the masterpieces of the French genius, has systematically overrated the productions of German thought and German art.

It would have been well if German writers had shown the same generous appreciation of the French and the English mind. But ever since 1870 the Germans, whilst allowing for individual freaks of genius, seem to be blind to the merits of other nations, and have claimed for themselves a monopoly of culture. In their judgment the Russian race are rotten before they have grown to maturity, as they showed during the Russo-Japanese War. Even so the English are an effete and decadent people, as their recent military history proves. A recent article of Dr. Carl Peters on the decline of the English race which appeared in *Die Woche* is representative of countless similar utterances. As for the French they are doomed to premature extinction. It is true that, like the Greeks of antiquity at the time of their decline, the French still continue to produce a few great men in literature, science, and art: an Anatole France, a Pasteur, and a Rodin. It is also true that even in applied science they are still leading the way in such industries as the motor car and the aeroplane. But what is the little aeroplane of the Frenchman compared with the giant airship of Germany? Is it not a

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fact that a thousand French aeroplanes do not cost or count as much as one Zeppelin?

The self-assertion of the Germans and the contempt for the foreigner reveal themselves in their political dealings with other nations. German statesmen continue the methods of Bismarck without having his genius. German politicians delight in shaking the mailed fist, in waving the national banner with the Imperial black eagle, the ominous and symbolical bird of prey. Wherever they meet with opposition they at once resort to comminatory messages. Compare the methods of the Emperor William with those of Edward the Seventh. Nothing illustrates better the differences between the characteristics of English and German diplomacy than the dramatic contrast between the bragging, indiscreet, impulsive, explosive manner of the Kaiser and the quiet, courteous manner of the English monarch. Nothing explains better the striking success which has attended English policy and the no less striking failure which has attended German policy. For in international as well as in private relations, intellectual superiority is often as efficient a weapon as an appeal to brute force. And all the might of the German Empire has not saved the German foreign policy from persistent bankruptcy. That bankruptcy is unanimously admitted even in Germany, and partly accounts for the present

temper of the nation. The times have changed, and even the weak cannot now be bullied into submission. At the Algeciras Conference even those small nations whose most obvious interest it was to side with Germany gave their moral support to France.

There still remains for us to examine one deeper reason why Germany is distrusted and disliked in Europe. *She is mainly distrusted because she continues to be the reactionary force in international politics.* Outside the sphere of German influence the democratic ideal has triumphed all over the civilized world, after centuries of heroic struggle and tragic catastrophes. But in Germany the old dogma is still supreme. Wherever German power has made itself felt for the last forty years—in Italy and Austria, in Russia and Turkey—it has countenanced reaction and tyranny. In politics Germany is to-day what Austria and Russia were in the days of the Holy Alliance, the power of darkness. Whilst in the provinces of science and art the German people are generally progressive, in politics the German Government is consistently retrogressive. It cannot be sufficiently emphasized and repeated that, more than any other State—more even than Russia—Prussia stands in the way of political advance. It was Prussia that helped to crush the Polish struggle for freedom in 1863 ;

when, a few years ago, English public opinion was protesting against the Armenian massacres, the Kaiser stood loyally by Abdul Hamid and propped his tottering throne; when the Russian Liberals were engaged in a life-and-death struggle with Czardom, the Kaiser gave his moral support to Russian despotism. It is not too much to say that it is the evil influence of Prusso-Germany alone which keeps despotism alive in the modern world.

I do not believe that all nations have the Government they deserve, and that they necessarily deserve the Government they have, any more than I believe that every husband has the wife he deserves or deserves the wife he has. Fortunate or unfortunate accidents may determine political as they may determine matrimonial unions. In the course of time unexpected shortcomings may reveal themselves—incompatibilities of temperament between Government and people as between husband and wife. At the same time it must be admitted that the German people have often too patiently and passively submitted to the tyranny of their rulers—that again and again they have sanctioned a Government policy which would have caused a revolutionary outburst in any free country; and it is deeply to be regretted that they should not have sometimes turned against their own oppressors some of those angry passions which

they have so freely exhibited against neighbouring nations. We must not forget that Bismarck was only able to realize his gigantic schemes in flagrant violation of the German constitution. When Parliament refused to obey his behests he dismissed it. For several years before the Danish and Austrian wars he increased taxation and raised revenue without troubling about the consent of the Prussian Diet--without even observing the outward forms and fictions of the law. And it is strictly true that the Hohenzollern may legitimately claim that the triumphs of the German arms have not been triumphs of the German people, but of the Hohenzollern dynasty.

We shall be able in a subsequent chapter to prove abundantly that, politically, the German people continue to remain in a state of pupillage and tutelage. The Prussian bureaucracy continues to apply against its own subjects those despotic methods which have ensured its predominance in the past. Prussia continues to oppress the Danes and the Poles. Mr. Norman Angell tells us that if Germany were to annex part of Belgium or of France, no individual German would be any the richer by one single acre of land, for the land would still remain the private property of each individual Frenchman or Belgian. That assertion, unfortunately,



would not hold for Prussia, for the Prussian bureaucrat does not recognize any inalienable rights of individuals wherever the interests of the State are supposed to be at stake. The Prussian Government are depriving the Polish landowner and the Polish peasant of the land of their fathers simply because the Polish landowner and the Polish peasant intend to remain Poles and refuse to become "Prussianized." It is true that the policy of the "Colonization Commission" has been a ghastly failure. Yet that Commission still survives, as a glaring instance of the extremities to which the Prussian Government will resort in case of necessity, and as a proof of their ignorance of the most elementary facts of political science.

We are therefore reluctantly driven to the conclusion that the psychological, moral, and political causes which we have briefly analyzed are amply sufficient to account for the distrust and suspicion which Germany inspires everywhere in Liberal Europe. And the distrust is not the result of ignorance or national prejudice: it is a reasoned conviction and the result of a prolonged experience. No doubt in most cases it is necessary to distinguish between the Government and the people. No doubt also there are many indications that the power of Prussian militarism and Prussian feudalism is seriously imperilled, that the German Empire is in rapid



transition, and that the law of acceleration which characterizes economic changes will also ultimately prevail in German politics. In the meantime Prussia continues to be the storm centre of Europe—the Prussian menace is more threatening than ever. And until that menace is removed, and as long as the Prussian spirit shall prevail in the councils of the German Empire, it behoves us to be vigilant, and not to forget that European liberty and European democracy are still at the mercy of military force and political tyranny.

## SOME PARADOXES AND CONTRADICTIONS OF MODERN GERMANY.

It is one of the axioms of practical diplomacy that when two nations wish to settle their differences and wish to bring complicated negotiations to a successful termination, their diplomatic representatives shall not only consider all the facts immediately bearing on the questions to be settled, but shall also take into account the "personal equation," the temper and character of the litigants. Let us remember this preliminary condition of our problem, and do our utmost to get a precise knowledge of the present characteristics of the German people.

When we are asked to formulate a deliberate opinion on the character of a friend whom we have known for a lifetime, we hesitate and pause and ponder, considering the complexity of human nature and the infirmity of our judgment. On the contrary, when we are asked to pass judgment, not on one individual, but on millions of whom we have no direct knowledge, and about whom we have very little indirect

information, we do not seem to feel the slightest hesitation in expressing a strong and unqualified opinion; and generally the less we do know, the stronger that opinion is likely to be. Forsooth, in the opinion of certain arm-chair politicians, are not all French people frivolous! are not all English people utilitarians or individualists! are not all Russians corrupt or superstitious!

As a matter of fact, to any thoughtful student of international politics there is no more delicate and difficult task than to express a competent opinion on any great collection of human beings. All generalizations on national character must be subject to considerable limitations. This is especially true with regard to the German people. In the case of Germany, any sweeping generalizations are manifestly futile and unreal. We have continually to qualify and modify our judgments; we have continually to distinguish between the North and the South, between Catholics and Protestants, between the Government and the people; we must constantly keep in mind, in judging the German people as a whole, that although they have been welded into an empire, they have not really achieved national unity: which is hardly astonishing when we consider that the German Empire is composed of many elements heterogeneous in race and religion—

Danes and Poles, Alsacians and Hanoverians—and that it is only forty years since those heterogeneous elements have been politically combined.

The history of civilization abundantly proves that spiritual unity is infinitely more difficult to realize than political unity. Spiritual unity necessarily brings about political unity; political unity may never be followed by spiritual unity. Certainly the German people have not drawn any nearer to its realization after forty years of empire. Indeed, they continue to present to us at the beginning of the twentieth century a bewildering mixture of spiritual paradoxes and political contradictions. It is the purpose of this chapter briefly to analyze and to explain some of those paradoxes and contradictions.

## I.

The German people of the past, as they were described, for instance, a hundred years ago by Madame de Staël in her classical book, "*De l'Allemagne*," were incurable idealists and dreamers, artists and musicians. Politically they were broken up into five hundred principalities, and were apparently incapable of co-operation and combination. The educated

German at that time seemed to possess only ideal and moral values. Like the French humanitarians and rationalists of the eighteenth century, whose loyal disciples they were, the great German writers and poets of the Golden Age of German literature — Lessing and Herder, Goethe and Schiller—had little feeling for the realities of national life. The German was not a *zoon politikon*, a political animal. He looked at political and social problems from the universal, not from the national point of view. The poet Heine, summing up in a famous epigram that idealistic tendency of the German mind, as contrasted with the tendencies of the French and the English, tells us that to the English belonged the empire of the sea, to the French belonged the empire of the continent, and to the Germans belonged the empire of the air.

To-day the German has ceased to be content with the empire of the air. He is not even satisfied with having achieved the empire of the continent; he now aims at the conquest of the sea.

As for the conquest of the air, he still claims it. But the air to the modern German is no longer the metaphorical and symbolical element which Heine meant in his epigram; the "empire of the air" is no longer the empire of pure thought and poetry—it is the military

control and possession of the third element through airships and balloons. The German of to-day still wants to attain to the upper regions of the atmosphere, but no more on the wings of imagination, but transported in well-equipped battalions in the leviathan ships of Count Zeppelin. The German of to-day still wants to rise and to soar, but no longer in order to sow broadcast the seeds of ideas from the high altitudes of speculation, but rather to throw down bombs and explosives. That we should be left in no doubt as to the absolute "transvaluation of moral values" which has taken place in modern Germany, Emperor William in one of his illuminative and impulsive speeches has told us who is the greatest German of the nineteenth century. Let the ignorant foreigner make no further mistake. The supreme incarnation of German genius and character is no longer Goethe or Beethoven, Kant or Wagner. The true German super-man is Count Zeppelin, the new viking of the air, the creator of the military aerial fleet.

To-day the German glorifies in being a realist, a *Realpolitiker*. He only thinks of political power and colonial expansion, and he conceives power in its most material form—the power of the sword and the power of money, which must ultimately attend the power of the sword. Even when he discusses abstract questions of morality



might is the supreme test of right. Only a few months ago Professor Hans Delbrück, discussing in a liberal spirit the petty persecutions of the Danish population in Schleswig-Holstein by the Prussian Government, blamed the bureaucracy, not because they were violating the rights of the Danish people, but because, by following their methods, they were acting against the interests of the State and undermining its power. Professor Delbrück condemned the Prussianizing policy, not because it meant to the Danes a violation of right, but because it brought to the Prussian State a diminution of might.

## II.

We come to a second and no less striking contradiction which is at the root of most political difficulties in the German Empire. Germany once was the leading Protestant country, the country of Luther, the nursery of that Higher Criticism and of that rationalist theology which has ruled in British Universities and British Churches for the last generation. And that was especially true of Northern Germany and Prussia. For that very reason the Catholic South gave its allegiance to Austria. It was the historical mission of Austria to unite all the

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German-speaking people into a Greater Germany, to bring them back into the fold of the Catholic Church, and to reconstitute the Holy Roman Empire. Until the very eve of Sadowa, the leaders of the Catholic party sided with the Habsburg, and considered the possible victory of Prussia as a German disaster.\* After the crushing defeat of Austria, the Catholic Church, under the guidance of Bishop Ketteler, gave up a forlorn hope, and decided that it would be wiser to come to terms with the victor. But the political conversion of the Catholics had come too late. The feeling of the Protestant North had been roused, and the aggressive attitude of the Ultramontanes precipitated the conflict. The cry of the National Liberals, "*Los von Rom*," became the watchword of the Prussian statesmen. After the Franco-German War Bismarck engaged in a life-and-death struggle of "culture" against ignorance and superstition. The conflict was fought with all the bitterness which always attends a religious war. The Catholic Church felt the mailed fist of the Iron Chancellor. Schools were closed, religious orders were expelled, bishops and cardinals were sent to prison. But the power of Rome proved too strong even for Bismarck, as it had proved too strong for the Hohenstaufen, for

\* This has been convincingly proved by Goyau, "*L'Allemagne religieuse*."

Louis the Fourteenth, and for Napoleon. David triumphed over Goliath. Little Windthorst compelled the Giant to beat an ignominious retreat and to go to Canossa.

Since the end of the Kulturkampf, and the extinction of the National Liberals as the controlling party in the Reichstag, the political and religious situation in Germany has dramatically changed. German Protestantism, no doubt, continues to provide great scholars and to dominate in the universities. His Excellency Professor von Harnack is only one amongst an innumerable band of Higher Critics and Church historians and theologians. Professor Drews, who in his "Myth of Christ" attempts to deny the historical existence of Jesus, is the lineal successor of David Friedrich Strauss. In point of numbers the Protestant population is still stronger by one-third than the Catholic population. In point of wealth the Protestants are incomparably richer than the Catholics. But as a Church, Protestantism is a dwindling force; as a political power she has ceased to dominate. It is the Catholic party, the Zentrum, which is the ruling party in the Reichstag. If the German Government cannot do and will not do all that the Centre demands, they cannot achieve anything which the Centre refuses to sanction; and before even considering any legislative measure, whatsoever it may be, it is a

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preliminary condition that the *approbetur* of the Ultramontane leaders be secured. One of the greatest personal forces of modern Germany, Friedrich Naumann, in his book on German political parties, sums up the whole situation in a phrase which is hardly an exaggeration: "Germany has become, politically, a more prosperous Spain."

In vain did Prince von Bülow attempt to break up, in 1907, the power of the Ultramontanes. Where Bismarck had failed it was not likely that his *epigon*, with all his diplomatic ingenuity, was going to succeed. Bülow attempted to form an unnatural coalition of the Reactionary-Radical *bloc*. The *bloc* was burst after a twelvemonth, and the Chancellor, after a nine years' rule, had to withdraw from the political stage, and he has now ample leisure in his Roman villa to meditate on the vanity of human greatness, on the ingratitude of princes, on the complex paradox of German politics, and on the omnipotence of the feeble old priest in the Vatican.

The Catholic Centre continues to-day to present a solid front against both Socialists and Liberals. The Catholic Church continues to have its own charities, its own denominational schools which receive the Government grants under its own inspectors, to extend its Government patronage, and to fill the public services

with its nominees. The Roman Catholic Church is more and more a State within a State, "*imperium in imperio*."

The Lutheran King of Prussia is gradually transforming himself into a Holy Roman Emperor; *Holy* because he is ruler by right divine, *Roman* because he receives his orders from the Eternal City.

### III.

There is a third contradiction which strikes the foreigner in the Germany of to-day, and this is the contradiction between German action and German thought. It seems as if the German were seeking in the sphere of the intellect a freedom which is denied him in the sphere of politics, and as if he felt the need of avenging himself against the abuses of authority in practical life by glorifying anarchy in philosophy and art. Certainly in the province of thought the German leaves all the landmarks of the past behind him. He has no respect for tradition or authority. He gives free play to his fancy. He follows the newest fashions, "*die neue Philosophie, die neure Philosophie, die neueste Philosophie*." Each thinker outbids his competitor in the boldness of his innovations. In England the most popular philosophers or



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theologians are those thinkers who advocate a reconciliation between religion and science, between the claims of the present and the claims of the past, the writings of Sir Oliver Lodge, or Benjamin Kidd, or William James, or Bergson. On the contrary, in Germany the most popular works are those of materialists like Haeckel or Bölsche, and, above all, the writings of heralds of revolt like Nietzsche. And Nietzsche is universally popular, not because of his intellectual integrity, not because of his fine moral personality, but because he is an iconoclast, an anti-Christian; he is the man who philosophizes with a hammer, the man who proclaims the twilight of the gods, the man who has transvalued all the moral values of humanity.

But once the German leaves the realm of pure thought he becomes again the bourgeois and the Philistine. He becomes the incarnation of those very defects which his favourite philosophers have been denouncing; he who a moment ago was defying the gods, now submits to the insolence of a subaltern officer; he who a moment ago claimed his absolute liberty of thought, and railed against the tyranny of superstition, now submits to the most petty regulations of the man in a uniform with a pointed helmet; he who a moment ago demanded that the last barriers of the moral law



shall be taken down, and that each man shall be a law to himself in practical life, is confronted at every step with the fateful words: "*Es ist verboten*"!

In the province of action the German is narrowly national. Every morning at breakfast he expects that his favourite newspaper shall provide him with a good slashing attack upon the Englishman, the Frenchman, and the Russian. Yet in literature and art his tastes are mainly French and English and Russian. His favourite authors are Anatole France and Maeterlinck, Gorki, Tolstoy, Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw, Ibsen and d'Annunzio.

It is difficult for an Englishman to realize the cosmopolitanism and the catholicity of German taste. In England Gorki and Ibsen are little more than names, and we are sure that some of their later plays would be hissed off the stage. We remember listening with impatience in one of the most important theatres of Berlin to an infinitely dull play of Gorki—*The Children of the Sun*—and we found to our amazement that the play was listened to with rapt attention by a full house. In England *Monna Vanna* is still forbidden by the censor. In Germany it has been acted thousands of times in every little theatre of the empire. It is not necessary to speak of the popularity of Shakespeare, for Shakespeare has become as much a German classic

as an English classic. As for Mr. Bernard Shaw, it can be said without exaggeration that he is a greater favourite in Germany than in England. We have seen *John Bull and his other Island*, and even *Man and Super-man*, played to empty houses in one of the two theatres of Edinburgh. In Dresden or Leipzig it would probably have been difficult to secure a seat.

#### IV.

All those contradictions ultimately resolve themselves into a contradiction between the past and the present. Nowhere are those contradictions so glaring. Nowhere has the past left more abiding traces. It seems as if the German people had only yesterday emerged from the Middle Ages; and, whilst remaining under their influence, had suddenly plunged into and become intoxicated with a new world. In the German Empire the times of the Hohenstaufen and the times of the Hohenzollern still co-exist side by side. If you visit Cologne or any of the old cities on the Rhine or in Southern Germany, the ancient town halls, the proud "burgs" and strongholds dominating the valley, the quaint and narrow streets with their protruding gables, the venerable Gothic cathedrals, all take our imaginations back to the Middle Ages. But take

the electric car to the new industrial suburbs, with their overhead railways, with their towering chimneys, the steeples of the new German faith, with their huge brand new factories, and you might believe yourself to be in Chicago or St. Louis, except for the greater cleanliness of the towns and the presence of the ubiquitous *Schutzmann*.

This comparison between the new industrial Germany and the cities of the United States is by no means far fetched or exaggerated. Acute observers like M. Jules Huret have again and again pointed out the resemblance between the industrial cities of Westphalia and the cities of the American West. The growth of Crefeld, Barmen, Elberfeld, has been almost as rapid as the growth of the mushroom towns in the New World.

## V.

And last, but not least, we would like to draw attention to another contradiction and paradox which has a very important relation to the problems discussed in this book. We are referring to the overbearing pride and tenacity with which the German asserts his nationality at home and the excessive humility and unconcern with which the German merges his nationality abroad.

It is almost pathetic to hear German professors and historians constantly emphasizing the pure and indelible character of the German race and nationality, to emphasize the *reines Deutschtum* and the *Deutsche Gesinnung*. As a matter of fact, so little has any specific and ineffaceable German character stamped itself on the individual citizen that the facility with which the German, once he has left his country, is assimilated, almost bespeaks a total absence of any political personality.

In other words, the German emphasizes his political personality when he is in a majority. He sinks it when he is in a minority. He attempts, and almost invariably without success, to impose his nationality by force and by war, and yet under normal conditions and in times of peace he cannot resist absorption. In other words, the German is the most incapable of assimilating others, the least imperial race, and, at the same time, the most easily assimilated by other races.

The French-Canadian, although loyal to the British flag, remains for ever a French-Canadian. A Dutchman remains a Dutchman, and doggedly resists absorption in South Africa. An Englishman remains hopelessly English, and wherever he goes he carries with him his golf clubs and his evening suit, his habits and his prejudices, his political creed and his Bible.

On the other hand, twenty millions of Germans and descendants of German settlers in the United States have been absorbed in less than two generations ; they are now merged in the American Commonwealth, and lost to the Vaterland.

And let it be noted that the phenomenon is by no means restricted to distant continents. It is even more conspicuous on the continent of Europe. Wherever a minority of Germans is settled on the same territory with a minority of Poles, Russians, or Hungarians, the Germans tend to be absorbed. Thus the proportion of the German-speaking to the non-German population steadily diminishes, although, after the Russians, the Germans are the most prolific race in Europe.

We have not discussed the foregoing contradictions and paradoxes of modern Germany in any spirit of carping criticism, nor for the idle satisfaction of pointing out the irony and the tragi-comedy of her politics. On the contrary, we fully sympathize with the difficulties of the German people. But whilst sympathizing with those difficulties, it is absolutely necessary from the outset of our inquiry to realize them clearly and to explain them if we wish to understand the present complex and perplexing situation of which the political paradoxes and contradictions of modern Germany are both the cause and the result.

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And realizing those paradoxes and contradictions, if ever we are inclined on account of them to depreciate the German character, we shall remember that the German people are the victims of historical fatalities and geographical conditions over which they have had little control. "*Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner!*" Considering the enormous advance made by the German people, one would think that to-day they have outlived those fatalities and that they are strong enough to conquer their liberties. But alas! an unbiassed study of the situation will soon drive us to the conclusion that historical and geographical fatalities are still sufficiently operative to provide the reactionary with arguments for perpetuating the present despotism and militarism.



## PRUSSIA AND GERMANY.

IN the foregoing chapter we drew attention to some of the paradoxes and contradictions of modern Germany. There still remains to emphasize and to explain what is perhaps the most striking paradox, the most glaring contradiction of them all. The contradiction is the essential unity and identity of Prussia and Germany for political and military purposes, and, on the other hand, their absolute diversity for every other purpose and in every other capacity. And the paradox is the absorption of the whole by the part, the total surrender of the Germans who are the majority, to the Prussians who are the minority, and a minority to whom the Germans are vastly superior in intellectual and artistic gifts and attainments, and for whom they feel little sympathy.

It is difficult to exaggerate the political domination of Germany by Prussia. The practice belies the theory : it is not as German Emperor, but as Prussian King that William the Second rules the confederation. The larger

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is merged in the smaller. The poor barren plains of Brandenburg and Pomerania rule over the smiling vineyards and romantic mountains of the south and west. The German people are governed more completely from Berlin and Potsdam than the French were ever governed from Paris and Versailles. And they are governed with an iron hand. In theory, every part of the empire may have a proportional share in the administration of the country; in reality, Prussia has the ultimate political and financial control. Germany pays the taxes; Prussia spends them. Germany provides the soldiers; Prussia commands them. And the Prussian War Lord and his Junkers in the last resort decide the issues of peace and war.

To realize how complete is the Prussian control we need only consider the fact that in the supreme Federal Parliament—the “Bundesrat”—for forty-two years the Prussian representatives have always had it their own way. Yet Prussia, according to the Constitution, has only got seventeen delegates out of fifty-two. When the Imperial Constitution was framed it was thought that the Prussian representation was far too small, and the fear was repeatedly expressed that the Prussian vote in the Bundesrat would be overruled. But not once has it happened that the German majority in the Bundesrat has dared to oppose any important

measure initiated by the Prussian Government. For all practical purposes, therefore, Prussia is the suzerain power. The German principalities and kingdoms are reduced to political tutelage and subjection.

Such a complete control of one nation which is in a minority over other nations which form the large majority is surely a paradox in our democratic age and under a régime which claims to be one of universal suffrage. It becomes doubly paradoxical if we consider that the subject nations are entirely different from and vastly superior to the controlling power. And it is trebly paradoxical if we consider that the control is accepted, if not without grumbling, at least without strong protest, and certainly without actual rebellion.

We need not dwell here on the geographical, ethnographical, and religious differences between Prussians and Germans, between North and South. It has to be remembered, of course, that technically the kingdom of Prussia to-day includes many provinces, like the Rhine Province, which have nothing Prussian in character, and that we are using the word Prussian in its historical meaning. Historic Prussia is a barren and monotonous desert. On the other hand, Germany has the rich diversity of smiling vineyards and romantic scenery, is traversed by magnificent rivers, is the seat of pros-

perous industries. Germany can boast of a comparatively pure Teutonic stock ; Prussia is a mongrel mixture of many races, and in its composition is certainly more Slavonic than Teutonic. The "colonization" of Prussia went on till the end of the eighteenth century, and its completion was one of the many achievements of Frederick the Great. Western and Southern Germany is largely Catholic ; Prussia is almost entirely Lutheran.

But it is not merely the external and physical or racial, or even religious, differences between North and South, between East and West, which must arrest our attention. It is more relevant to the purpose of our argument to emphasize the effect of those differences on the national character, and to point out the absolute opposition between the Prussian temperament and the German temperament, the striking incompatibility of disposition between Berlin and Munich, between Königsberg and Cologne.

The Southern and Western German is still to-day as he was in the days of Madame de Staël, artistic and poetic, brilliant and imaginative : a lover of song and music. The Prussian remains as he has always been, inartistic and dull and unromantic. Prussia has not produced one of the great composers who are the pride of the German race ; and Berlin, with all its wealth and its two million inhabitants, strikes

the foreigner as one of the most commonplace capitals of the civilized world. The Southern and Western German is gay and genial, courteous and expansive; the Prussian is sullen, reserved, and aggressive. The Southern and Western German is sentimental and generous; the Prussian is sour and dour, and only believes in hard fact. The Southern and Western German is an idealist; the Prussian is a realist and a materialist, a stern rationalist, who always keeps his eye on the main chance. The Southern and Western German is independent almost to the verge of anarchism; he has a strong individuality; his patriotism is municipal and parochial; he is attached to his little city, to its peculiarities and local customs: the Prussian is imitative, docile, and disciplined; his patriotism is not the sentimental love of the native city, but the abstract loyalty to the State. The Southern and Western German is proud of his romantic history, of his ancient culture; the Prussian has no culture to be proud of—politically he is an upstart. Prussia is a settlement, an army, and a bureaucracy rather than a nation; but the Prussian is unswervingly loyal to the commander of that army, submissive to the chief of that bureaucracy.

How shall we explain this startling paradox? How is it, and why is it, that the artistic and

exuberant, genial and sentimental German submits to the hard rule of the commonplace, uninteresting, and dour Prussian?

If you ask ninety-nine out of a hundred Germans they will not give you a reply. They know too little of and care too little about politics to be even aware of the fact. They are satisfied with appearances. They do not see the King of Prussia behind the German Kaiser. They are hypnotized by the glittering helmet of the War Lord.

But if you succeed in discovering one in a hundred who understands the relation between Germany and Prussia, and who has thought out the political problem, he will probably give you something like the following reply:—

“I know that there is no love lost between the Germans and the Prussians. I know that in culture and native ability we are as superior to the Prussians as our vine-clad hills are superior in beauty to the sandy wastes of Pomerania. And I know that in politics we play a subordinate part, although we are superior. But I also realize that it is necessary for us to submit. And it is necessary for us to submit, precisely because of our virtues. For those virtues of ours are unpractical. And it is necessary for the Prussians to rule, precisely because of their shortcomings. For those shortcomings are practical. The pure gold of the



German temper could never be made into hard coin nor used to advantage. It could be made to produce splendid works of art, gems and diadems and ornaments, but for practical purposes, in order to forge the weapons of the Nibelungen, the alloy of the baser metal was indispensable. It required the mixture of Prussian sand and Prussian iron to weld us into a nation, to raise us to an empire. It is because we Germans are artists and dreamers and individualists that we could never manage our own affairs, that we have always been 'non-political animals.'\* On the contrary, it is because the Prussian has no brilliance, no romance, no personality, that he makes a splendid soldier and a model bureaucrat. Two things above all were required to make Germany into a powerful state—a strong army and a well ordered administration. Prussia has given us both.

"And let us not forget that Germany more than any other Power required such a strong army and such a strong administration, not only owing to the shortcomings of her national character, but owing to the weakness and danger of her geographical position. Germany is open on every frontier. She has ever been harassed by dangerous enemies. Only a generation ago

\* This is again and again admitted even by the most patriotic German writers. (See General von Bernhardi's last book, "The Coming War:" "Wir sind ein unpolitisches Volk"—"We are a non-political people.")

she was threatened on every side. On the north she had to face the rulers of the sea, who hampered her commercial expansion; on the west she had to face the restless Gaul; on the south she was confronted with the clerical and Jesuitical empire of the Habsburg; on the east with the empire of the Romanoffs. From all those enemies Prussia has ultimately saved us. The Hohenzollern dynasty has proved a match for them all.

"The whole annals of Germany and Prussia are a striking proof of the political weakness of the German and of the strength of the Prussian character. Again and again Germany has witnessed magnificent outbursts of national prosperity. She has seen the might of the Hohenstaufen; she has seen the wealth of the Hansa towns. Again and again she has witnessed the spontaneous generation and blossoming of civic prosperity; she has seen the glory and pride of Nuremberg and Heidelberg, of Cologne and Frankfurt, the art of Dürer and Holbein. But again and again German culture has been nipped in the bud. It has been destroyed by civil war and religious war, by internal anarchy and foreign invasion. The Thirty Years' War devastated every province of the German Empire, and such was the misery and anarchy that in many parts the people had reverted to savagery and cannibalism.\* And

\* See Arvède Barine's "*Madame: Mère du Régent.*"

hardly had the country recovered from the horrors of the wars of religion, when repeated French invasions laid waste the rich provinces of the Rhine and Palatinate. So completely did German rulers of the eighteenth century betray their duty to the people that some princes degraded themselves to the point of selling their soldiers to the Hanoverian kings in order to fight the battles of England in America.

“Whilst the German princes were thus squandering the treasure and life-blood of their subjects, there was growing up in the North a little State which was destined from the most unpromising beginnings for the most glorious future. It is true that the little Prussian State was wretchedly poor; for that very reason the Prussian rulers had to practise strict economy and unrelenting industry. It is true the country was always insecure and constantly threatened by powerful neighbour; for that very reason the people had to submit to a rigid discipline and a strong military organization. It is true the country was depopulated; for that very reason the rulers had to attract foreign settlers by a just, wise, and tolerant government.”

A patriotic German might illustrate in the following simple parable the complex and strange relations between Germany and Prussia:—

“The German people a century ago might

be compared to the heirs and owners of an ancient estate. The estate was rich and of romantic beauty. The heirs were clever, adventurous, and universally popular. But although devoted to each other, they could not get on together. Their personality was too strong, and they were always quarrelling. Nor could they turn to advantage their vast resources, and the natural wealth of the estate only served to attract outside marauders. They were so extravagant and so unpractical that they would lay out beautiful parks and build magnificent mansions whilst neglecting to drain the land and to repair the fences. They would spend lavishly on luxuries, but they would grudge food to the cattle and manure to the fields. Thus, with all their splendid possessions, the German heirs were always on the verge of bankruptcy.

"To extricate themselves, they decided to accept the services of a factor and manager. The factor was the Prussian Junker. He was an alien. For he could hardly be called a German. In blood he was more Slav than Teutonic. He was unrefined, unsympathetic, and overbearing. But as a manager he was splendid. He bought up outlying parts to round off the estate. He paid more attention to the necessities than to the luxuries and the amenities of life. He was more careful to surround himself with a strong police force than with poets

and minstrels. But he was able to keep out the marauders and the poachers. He was able to protect the property against the stronger neighbours and to bully the weaker neighbours into surrendering desirable additions to the estate. In a short time the heirs, formerly universally popular, were cordially hated in the land. But their rents had increased by leaps and bounds, and the German estate had been rounded off and made into one solid and compact whole."

Such, German writers would tell us, is the parable of Germany and Prussia. The Germans are the gifted, generous, and spendthrift heirs to an illustrious domain. Prussia is the alien, upstart, unpopular, unsympathetic, bullying factor and manager. But to this bullying factor Germany owes the consolidation and prosperity of the national estate.

The foregoing parable, no doubt, may express some aspects of the relationship between Germany and Prussia, but as an explanation of German history it is an absurd parody, and in accepting it the German people are the victims of a perverse humility which would be inconceivable if we did not know that a school of historians in the service of Prussia have systematically accredited those views for many generations. Neither are the German people the incapable and spendthrift heirs reduced by need to political impotence, nor has the Prussian



factor been content with being the useful though unpleasant manager of the German estate. The factor has become the overbearing master, and is bent on dispossessing the German heirs of their legitimate rights, and on reducing them to political subjection.

The parable only contains one fundamental truth. The Reformation had divided the German nation into two irreconcilable camps. Even after the religious passion had subsided, the obstacles in the way of German unity remained. German unity could not be restored by Clerical and Ultramontane Austria. It could not be restored by Bavaria, which was politically too feeble and under the influence of France. A third German power had to arise, Protestant enough to impose itself on the Lutheran population, yet tolerant enough to render any religious wars for ever impossible.

The German people are slandering themselves when they lay themselves prostrate before the sword and the peaked helmet of the Hohenzollern monarchy. They are not predestined for all time to come to be the utterly incapable politicians which they profess to be. They are not an essentially "unpolitical" race doomed to anarchy, and the Prussians are not the imperial race predestined to supremacy. Indeed, in political capacity the Southern Germans are far more gifted than the Prussians. *Their tra-*



*ditions of municipal government are as superior to the bureaucratic traditions of Prussia as the genius of liberty is superior to the genius of despotism.* No country can boast of a more glorious civic history than the free German cities of the South and of the East. It is true that in the chaos of the religious wars those free institutions disappeared with almost every other vestige of German culture ; it is true that German Protestantism, by surrendering to the State both the temporal and spiritual power, proved favourable to despotism. But the German people would have learnt again their political lesson, and they would have learnt it in the only school where the art of government can be learnt—the hard and stern school of experience ; and certainly they will not learn the art of self-government from their Prussian masters. So far from training them in the art and science of politics, the Prussian despot has been the worst conceivable teacher they could have chosen ; and if his rule were to be perpetuated for many generations he would destroy the splendid municipal traditions inherited from the Middle Ages.

The political dissensions and disasters of Germany are constantly given as a convincing proof of the political incapacity of the German people. But certainly the German people were not responsible for those dissensions and

disasters. The wars of religion of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the direct result of the Reformation, and the wars of the Revolution and the Empire were the direct result of a general political upheaval of Europe. And if Napoleon did invade Germany, Prussia had forestalled France, and in 1793 had declared an unwarranted war against the French Republic. In the nineteenth century the political dissensions in Germany were the consequence of the rivalry of Austria and Prussia, both of whom aspired to the control of the German Federation. It is absurd to see in those inevitable divisions a proof of any inherent political incapacity of the people. And even if such an incapacity did exist Prussian despotism would not have been the remedy.

And just as it is absurd to make the German people responsible for their political weakness, which has been the result of geographical conditions and historical conjunctures, it is impossible to give to Prussia the credit of having put an end to German anarchy, and of having achieved German unity. That unity was inevitable, because the German people wanted unity, and because all the forces of the times were in favour of unity. The most difficult task in the unification of Germany, the Zollverein, the customs union, was an accomplished fact long before 1848 for the greater part of the German

Confederation. Prussian historians have distorted German history, and have thrown into the shade the heroic achievements of the past. The magnificent outburst of 1848 is passed over by official annalists, and is nearly forgotten. But the fact remains that, so far from hastening on German unity, the ambition of Prussia postponed it. Sixty years ago the parliament of Frankfurt decreed the political unity of the country. So strong was the national desire, so unanimous the popular feeling, so clearly did the people understand that the only obstacle came from Austria and Prussia, that the German democracy offered the Imperial Crown to an autocrat known for his feudal principles. But the autocrat, Frederick William the Fourth, refused to hold his title from the people. He realized that an empire established on a democratic foundation would put an end for ever to the irresponsible despotism of the Prussian king. But for this criminal selfishness of Frederick William, which stands in such a glaring contrast with the patriotic self-surrender of the people, and but for the Prussian betrayal of the interests of the confederation, German unity would have been achieved peacefully so far back as 1848. No doubt it would not have been achieved by blood and iron. But it still remains to be proved that blood and iron and the teeth of the dragon are the necessary ingredient or cement

of a modern nationality. And no doubt German unity would not have been bought at the cost of the confiscation of popular liberty. But it remains still to be proved that the confiscation of popular liberty is the indispensable preliminary to the making of a great people.

And, therefore, not only are we convinced that German unity would have come sooner without the intervention of Prussia, but it would have been closer, more real, and more permanent. As the contradictions which we analyzed in a previous chapter, as the many parties in the Reichstag abundantly prove, German unity is far from being an accomplished fact. Germany remains a geographical expression. After all, even to the most superficial observer, it must be apparent to-day that iron and blood have not welded Germany together. Neither Schleswig-Holstein nor Alsace-Lorraine, nor Hanover nor Poland, are integral parts of the empire. Even the particularism of the South has not wholly disappeared. The rifts are widening every day in the Imperial structure. Military despotism may artificially keep together the different parts and conceal the process of disintegration ; but that military despotism cannot last for ever in a great industrial commonwealth honeycombed with Socialism. When the German people awaken from their political slumber we shall

realize how little Prussia has done for German unity.

For what is true of the political unity applies even more strongly to the moral and spiritual unity of Germany. The Germans are apt to rail at the political anarchy which prevails in France, at the civil distractions of the Dreyfus affair. It is true that a Dreyfus affair would have been impossible in Germany, for the simple reason that the German Jews still suffer from civil disabilities, and are still excluded from the army and from the responsible posts of the civil service, and mainly because in Germany the sense of political justice is not so acutely developed that an injustice done to a Jew would cause a civil war. And it is equally true that German dissensions are not forced on the superficial observer. In France any political divisions are revealed *urbi et orbi*. In Germany they are not proclaimed on the housetops. But as a matter of fact France is a united family compared to Germany. And a Frenchman to-day has ceased to inquire whether Calvin and Robespierre came from the North, and whether Mirabeau and Thiers came from the South, whether Montesquieu was a Gascon, and Corneille a Norman, and Bossuet a Burgundian. Compared to the Reichstag, the French Palais Bourbon is a harmonious assembly. There is no cleavage in France so profound as the



cleavage between the German Catholic South and the Protestant North, between the industrial and Socialistic West and South-West and the reactionary and agrarian East and North-East. The reactionary Junkers east of the Elbe—or the *Ost-Elbier*, as they are nicknamed—the Social Democrats, the Clericals of the Centre, and the Protestant Freethinkers are arrayed in irreconcilable armies. Forty years ago the opposition between Catholics and Protestants culminated in the Kulturkampf. Catholicism emerged victorious, and peace was proclaimed. But that peace is only a truce. Equally precarious is the *modus vivendi* between the industrial army and the agrarian army; and the day cannot be far off when religious war and social war will shake united Germany to its foundations, for Protestant and freethinking Germany will not for ever submit to being ruled by Westphalian and Bavarian priests.

Not only have historians enormously exaggerated the services of Prussia to German unity, but even if those services had been as real and as far-reaching as they are said to be, the payment would have been extravagantly high. We might grant the vital necessity of a strong police, a strong army, and a strong administration; and we might also grant that the kings of Prussia were, by training and tradition, best qualified to organize such a police,



such an army, and such a bureaucracy. But in our complex industrial civilization, which can ultimately thrive only through freedom, initiative, and enterprise, an army and a bureaucracy must remain serviceable tools. If restricted to its proper function an army is the most useful of servants; otherwise it becomes the most dangerous of tyrants. Any nation makes a bad bargain which surrenders its political rights in exchange for a temporary and precarious protection.

To come back to our former parable, it may have been necessary for the German heirs to engage the services of the Prussian factor, and to submit to his overbearing manners. But it was an evil day when they gave up to the Hohenzollern the control of the German estate. Too often has it happened in private life that for lack of vigilance on the part of the legitimate owners the factor has become the master, and turned out those whose interests he was to protect. This is exactly what has happened in contemporary Germany. The Prussian factor has become a martinet and a tyrant. Fortunately, what to a private individual would be irreparable ruin need only be a temporary evil in a nation. The German people are beginning to realize that they have sold their political birthright for a mess of Prussian pottage. The Prussian hypnotism has lasted too long, and the

people are awakening from their hypnotic trance. Let them become more fully conscious of their present serfdom, and they will claim and regain those ancient liberties which the Prussian Kaisertum and the Prussian Junkertum have taken away from them.

## REACTION IN GERMANY.

WE shall see in a succeeding chapter whether German Socialism is a force working for peace. But assuming for the moment that it is, two questions at once force themselves upon us : "Has German Socialism any decisive influence on the government of the country ? And have the German people any voice in settling the fateful issues of peace and war ?" This again brings us to the central problem of German politics : the struggle between political liberty and reaction.

Reaction is supreme in every department of German life. Prussian despotism may be enlightened despotism, and it may be beneficent. We do not wish to minimize whatever it may have done for the good of the people. Least of all do we wish to minimize its achievements in social legislation, through its insurance laws, and old age pensions. But neither ought we to overrate its merits. In its social policy the Imperial Government was by no means inspired by disinterested motives, any more than Bismarck

was actuated by a love of democracy when he granted universal suffrage, or Beaconsfield when he extended the franchise in 1867. The main object which the German statesmen pursued in their social legislation was to conciliate the masses, to disarm the Socialists, and to extend their own power. Nor must we forget that any social legislation involving compulsory measures and government supervision and legislation is much easier to carry out in a centralized and disciplined State like Germany, which is also an employer of labour on a huge scale.

But we are not discussing here the relative merits of despotism and freedom. We are not discussing whether freedom with all its risks is preferable to despotism with all its benefits. We are trying to define the nature of Prussian despotism. And our contention is that, whether enlightened or not, whether benevolent or not, it is certainly more despotic than in any other country; and it is more despotic, because more systematic, more rigid, more absolute. That rigid despotism has prevailed ever since 1870. For a few years Bismarck tried to govern with the National Liberals, but they were compelled to sink their Liberalism and only to remember their Nationalism. And when they became restive, Bismarck discarded them. Many years after Bismarck, Prince von Bülow for a brief space

governed with the Radicals, but the Centre proved too strong for his coalition of Liberals and Conservatives, and the German Government once more was at the mercy of the "Black-blue bloc," the alliance of Catholic and Protestant reactionaries.

Not only the Government, but the Constitution of the empire itself is reactionary. At first sight it seems to rest on a democratic basis, the basis of universal suffrage. But we know from Bismarck's "Memoirs" that universal suffrage was only an opportunist measure to compel recalcitrant German principalities to join the Imperial federation. It was not an essential part of the Constitution. It was not an end in itself, but a means to an end. If the means proved troublesome, it could be revoked, the concession could be withdrawn. But Bismarck was not afraid. He had taken every precaution to prevent universal suffrage from being effective. He had learned from Louis Napoleon this most useful lesson, that universal suffrage can be made to be perfectly harmless, that it does in no wise commit the monarchy to a liberal policy, and that it may be manipulated at will, if the Government only shows sufficient diplomacy. Bismarck therefore knew what he was doing when he granted to the German Democrats the concession of manhood suffrage. And his anticipations have been fully

realized ; manhood suffrage, even as in Belgium to-day, even as in the France of Napoleon the Third, has not proved an obstacle to absolutism ; rather has it proved an obstacle to parliamentary government.

We are apt to forget that, strictly speaking, a parliamentary government does not exist in Germany, although we constantly speak of a "German Parliament." According to the Constitution, the Chancellor is not responsible to Parliament, he is only responsible to the Emperor. There is no Cabinet or delegation of the majority of the Reichstag. There is no party system. There are only party squabbles. I do not know whether Mr. Belloc would approve of the German Constitution, but it certainly enables the Government to soar high above all the parties in the Reichstag. German Liberals may be morally justified in their struggle against political reaction, but technically the Government are acting within their constitutional right. And when, therefore, the Reichstag attempts to control the executive, it is rather the Reichstag which is unconstitutional. On the other hand, when the Emperor asserts his divine right, it is he who is true to the spirit of the Constitution ; he is only giving a religious interpretation and colour to a political prerogative which he undoubtedly possesses. And not only is there no parliamen-



tary government, but there is not even a desire, except with a small fraction of Radicals, to possess such a government. Prussian publicists again and again tell us that Germany does not want to copy English institutions. The old German monarchic institutions are good enough for Germany. Read the treatise of Treitschke, the great historian and political philosopher of modern Prussia. He systematically attempts to belittle every achievement of the parliamentary system ; and every prominent writer follows in his footsteps. Prussia has not produced a Guizot, a Tocqueville, a Stuart Mill, or a Bryce. Her thinkers are all imbued with the traditions of enlightened despotism. Even the great Mommsen cannot be adduced as an exception. He makes us forget his Liberalism, and only remember his Cæsarism.

The powers of the Reichstag are very limited. It is mainly a machine for voting supplies, but even that financial control is more nominal than real. For under the Constitution the Assembly must needs make provision for the army and navy, which are outside and above party politics. And having previously fixed the contingent of the Imperial forces, the army and navy estimates must needs follow. In the present tension of international politics, a reduction is out of the question. Theoretically, the Reichstag can indeed

oppose an increase, but practically the increase is almost automatic. The Reichstag could only postpone it, and in so doing would have to face unpopularity. Every party vies with its rivals in sacrificing their principles on the altar of patriotism. Whereas the Catholic Party in Belgium has for twenty-eight years refused the means of national defence, and has made the Belgian army into a byword on the plea that barrack life is dangerous to the religious faith of the peasant, the German Catholics have voted with exemplary docility every increase of the army and navy. Only once did they dare to propose a small reduction in the estimates for the expenditure on the war against the Herreros. But the indignation they raised by their independent attitude, and the doubtful elections of 1907, taught them a practical lesson in patriotic submission which they are not likely soon to forget.

The Reichstag, therefore, is largely a debating club, and its debates are as irresponsible as those of students in a university union, because no speech, however eloquent, carries with it any of the responsibilities of government. The Opposition in England is careful of the language it uses, and more careful of the promises it makes, because it knows that it may be called upon to fulfil its promises and to carry out the policy it advocates. In

Germany there is no such possibility. The Opposition is only platonic. It is doomed to impotence.

But even if the Reichstag had the constitutional power, it could not make use of it, because it is hopelessly divided. The old curse of Protestant sectarianism and schism continues to cling to German politics—the incapacity to unite. There are many groups, and of these at least five are forces to be counted with: the Progressive Radicals, the National Liberals, the Conservative Protestants, the Social Democrats, and, above all, the Catholic Centre. All those parties fight for their own ends, and recent debates on financial reform have proved how sordidly selfish those ends are. The ruling classes refuse to contribute their share to the Imperial budget, and that budget is much less democratic than the English budget, where the income tax and the death duties fall mainly on the well-to-do classes.

As no party is strong enough to constitute a majority, they have to enter into combination with other parties, and those combinations are generally more or less temporary, and always conditional. For circumstances are constantly changing, and the parties themselves are always shifting their ground. It is difficult for an outside observer to thread his way through the quicksands of Reichstag politics. The French

Government has often been accused of being unstable, but German politics are far more shift and unstable, more erratic and bewildering, than the politics of Republican France.

But political instability is not the most serious consequence of this extreme division of parties. There is the far more serious consequence of political immorality, the absence of all principle, or the subordination of principle to party purposes. For parties, in order to secure a majority, have often to ally themselves with other parties which may have nothing in common with them, which may, indeed, have entirely opposite ideas. We constantly witness in the German Reichstag the most monstrous alliances. Extreme Protestants will ally themselves with atheistic Socialists, Radicals will ally themselves with Conservatives. There is no conceivable combination in the complex chemistry of modern politics which cannot be studied in the history of the German Reichstag.

Under such conditions politics become an ignoble game of haggling, of bargaining and bartering. The very word political "principle" loses its meaning. Cynicism and indifferentism take its place. Opportunism reigns supreme. "Trimming" is reduced to a fine art. No party is loyal to its flag. Even the Catholics betray their trust and allow their Polish brethren to be persecuted. Political

materialism, under the disguise of the *Realpolitik*, is supreme in the empire.\*

It is the baneful consequences resulting from the extreme division of parties, which in recent years have converted many German politicians to the English "two party" system, at the very moment when in England the faith in the party system is beginning to be shaken.

"A Parliament," says an eminent parliamentarian, Dr. Naumann, "which is composed only of two great parties has quite naturally the government in its hands, for the leading minister must have the majority behind him, if he does not want to-morrow to be a man with whom everything goes amiss, and who, therefore, is compelled to retire. Thereby, no doubt, the freedom of the elector is decreased, but the power of the elected is increased. Under the two party system the elector has only the right to decide between two Government groups. He goes to the group which promises him most or which accomplishes most. In promises the Opposition is naturally stronger than the Government majority, but when its turn comes to win, it is bound to fulfil its promises. There lies the limit of its agitation against its opponents. Parties which can come into power within an appreciable time must carry on a more moderate and, therefore, a more real agitation than parties which are necessarily excluded from power. If a Social Democrat could once be a Cabinet minister with us, what a training and discipline this would be to him and his followers !

\* Nor is German politics by any means free from corruption. I am not alluding to the court scandals revealed by the Moltke-Harden Trial, but to the far more serious scandals and revelations of malversation and peculation in the navy. Many German high officials obviously thrive on the expansion of the navy.



But the multiplicity of parties makes responsibility impossible. Responsible with us only is the Government. Parties talk, promise, desire, formulate, declaim, and debate."

If the dissensions and divisions amongst German citizens are the cause of the multiplicity of parties, it is the multiplicity of parties which causes their weakness, and it is the weakness of parties which again accounts for the strength of the Government. The art of government in Germany for the last twenty-five years has consisted largely in playing off one party against another. There was a time when the most efficient way of dealing with the Reichstag was to bully it. Bismarck was little inclined to conciliate or to coax a refractory assembly, but Hohenlohe, Bülow, and von Bethmann-Hollweg have discovered that the methods of the diplomat are more efficient than those of the soldier, that statecraft is safer and quicker than violence. The best definition of a German Chancellor to-day is that of a political rope dancer, or to use a more respectful metaphor, of a political chess player. In this game Bülow has been a wonderful virtuoso. He has in turn utilized the Catholics and the Conservatives and the Radicals to achieve his purpose, using them to-day and discarding them to-morrow. It is true that even the most clever virtuoso must meet with temporary difficulties and must make a false



move, but when the Chancellor makes a mistake it is easily retrieved. As long as he has the Kaiser behind him, the people and their elected representatives do not matter. He can always dismiss a recalcitrant Chamber. He need not do it as brutally as the irrepressible Herr von Oldenburg advised, and send a few Horse Guards to close the proceedings. He need only choose his own time and dissolve the Reichstag. Or, when he is driven into a corner, the Chancellor has only to raise some loud-sounding battle-cry. Of such battle-cries there is in Germany an inexhaustible supply. It may be difficult to unite the Germans on some vital question of constructive policy, but you can always create a movement and raise a cry *against* somebody. It may be an agitation against Clericalism. It may be the cry, "*Los von Rom.*" It may be an agitation against Socialism. It may be the cry, "Property is imperilled." Most efficient of all, it may be an agitation against England or France. It may be the war-cry, "The Vaterland is in danger!" And whilst Socialists, Catholics, and National Liberals are fighting it out, the Chancellor secures his majority for the greater glory of the King of Prussia.

There is a mysterious and exalted body in the German Empire, the Bundesrat, which few foreign newspapers ever mention, and of

which the average educated Englishman does not even suspect the existence. The Bundesrat in some respects may be compared to the House of Lords, but its power is not restricted to a right of veto. In several other respects it resembles the American Senate, but its attributes are far wider and more important. And those attributes have been steadily growing. To-day it is not the Reichstag which controls the Bundesrat—it is the Bundesrat which controls the Reichstag and reduces it to impotence.

It will be objected that the foregoing summary judgment on the German Constitution does not err on the side of appreciation, and we admit that the Reichstag and the Bundesrat do not express and exhaust the whole of German public life. If, instead of describing those assemblies, we were to describe the activities of the efficient and much-maligned German bureaucracy and of the Civil Service, we might have a very different tale to tell. But, after all, we are discussing the political life of the empire, and not its administrative machinery, and with regard to that life we do not think that our judgment is unfair. Still, lest we be suspected of being unduly severe, it may not be irrelevant to give the opinion of a prominent leader of the German Reichstag, Dr. Friedrich Naumann, who is both a patriot and a Liberal, and who for more than a generation

has played a conspicuous part in the political struggles of his country :—

“The German Empire has two political forces—the Bundesrat and the Reichstag—but of those forces the one is infinitely stronger than the other, for the Bundesrat can dissolve the Reichstag, but the Reichstag cannot dissolve the Bundesrat. The Bundesrat can play catchball with the Reichstag. Somewhere in their palace their delegates sit together in secret and throw our resolutions into the wastepaper basket. But they demand of us that we shall accept their proposals.—If the Reichstag does not do what the Bundesrat demands, there comes a smash. There is an appeal to national feeling, and the sinners must do penance. But when the Bundesrat does not do what the majority of the Reichstag has resolved, then nothing happens—absolutely nothing! Such is the condition of affairs which we in Germany call, ‘Parliamentary Government.’ From this condition the Reichstag must be saved, or it will sink even lower—as low as the Roman Senate at the time of the emperors.

“Poor, honest Reichstag! I have pity on thee, although I myself belong to thee. Ministers are forced upon thee, and thou canst say nothing against it! When on a particular day a Cabinet Secretary or an Imperial Chancellor falls into disfavour, the fact is hardly mentioned to us. The Reichstag is informed of it through the newspapers. That is what happened with Count Posadowsky. This man had his majority, not indeed for his programme but for his person. He enjoyed the confidence of the majority of the House. But that has not helped him—absolutely nothing!

“Poor, honest Reichstag! what principles or measures of contemporary German politics really have originated from thee? Every essential law has emanated from the Federal Governments, whether those laws have been

good or bad. Customs laws, insurance laws, Liberal politics, increase of the navy, finance politics—all those measures came into being after the silent Chamber of the Bundesrat had taken them in hand. The Reichstag has the right of initiative just as much as the Federated Government, but it lies in its composition that it can do nothing with this right. It has not yet found the means to compel the Bundesrat to do anything, because it has not got any stable leading majority, and the people feel instinctively that the Reichstag is only a kind of supervising authority—a great ponderous bureau for drawing up proposals for the Government. Oh! if the Reichstag could only carry through something of its own initiative. I see its members running to the State secretaries. In that assembly there is as much haggling as at the exchange, but each group is making a bargain for itself. Bismarck is still laughing in his grave for having combined it all so ingeniously. No achievement of his reveals his statecraft to better advantage than his dispositions of the Bundesrat and the Reichstag, for those dispositions are the greatest obstacle to parliamentary government in Germany. He granted popular rights, but he took every precaution that the popular will shall not be carried out. He created an indissoluble secret college and a dissoluble public parliament. He knew perfectly well which of the two would prove the stronger, and we experience every day how completely he has tied the democracy while seeming to favour it."

It is then unanimously admitted that in the Imperial Reichstag, as well as in the Bundesrat, reaction has continuously prevailed for forty years. But it might be said that in the Reichstag at least there has always been a strong, though impotent, opposition. Even this much,

alas! cannot be asserted of the Prussian Landtag. In that assembly the very shadow of opposition has vanished, and the fact is all the more important because for all the realities of ordinary political life the Prussian Parliament is so much more important than the Reichstag.

The Prussian Landtag may justly be called the most mediæval assembly of modern Europe, compared with which even a Russian Duma is an advanced body. The electoral law by which the Prussian Parliament is elected is probably the most scandalous law in existence. Its repeal has been promised again and again by German statesmen, and even in speeches from the throne. Yet it continues to reign, an insult to common sense.

Under the Prussian "three class" system voting is public, and the voter is therefore amenable to outside pressure. The voting is indirect, and therefore it is capable of outside manipulation. The first electors elect a small body, who in turn elect the representatives. For the purpose of election the citizens are divided into three classes, the voting power being in proportion to the taxes paid, and each class having equal voting power. Supposing that a particular electoral division pays 6,000 marks in taxes, the amount payable by one of the three classes would be 2,000 marks. If in that district there only lives one rich man



paying that amount, he would by himself constitute the first class. If there are twenty people who each pay 100 marks in taxes, they form the electors of the second class. If there are 200 electors paying 10 marks each in taxes they form the third class. Thus one elector of the first class has as much electoral power as the 20 electors of the second class, and as much power as the 200 electors of the third class. Those figures are, of course, arbitrary, and are only given to make the whole system intelligible. But, as a matter of fact, the disproportion of those figures is even exceeded in the reality. In the electoral circle of Berlin No. III. there exists the division 99. In that division lives the family of Botzov, brewers and landowners. One Mr. Botzov forms the first class by himself, and another Mr. Botzov forms the second class by himself, and all the 571 remaining electors constitute the third class. The two Messrs. Botzov together elect twice the number of electors chosen by the 571 electors of the third class.

In the last election for the Prussian Landtag, in 1903, the following are the statistics of those qualified to vote:—

The first class included .	. 239,000
The second class included .	. 857,000
The third class included .	. 6,600,000



It is necessary to go back to the good old times of Greece and Rome to discover an electoral system so ingenious as the Prussian system. We involuntarily think of the electoral law of Servius Tullius and Tarquinius Superbus. The Prussian ruling class may well be proud of evoking such ancient and classical associations!

When a country agrees to be ruled by such a monstrous system it is not to be wondered at that the influence of reaction should make itself felt in every department of public life. The reality of local self-government in Prussia only exists in the big municipalities. The ordinary local government authorities, who possess all the substance of political power—the Governor, or *Oberpräsident*, the Landrat, and the police—are the direct representatives of the Central Government, and through them the Prussian Government make their power felt in every German village. Nor must we forget that the higher administrative authorities almost exclusively belong to the nobility, and they defend the interests of their caste all the more thoroughly because they are invested with powers which far exceed the powers of any local government authorities in the United Kingdom.

The same centralization reigns in the Civil Service and in the judicature. In England the judiciary is practically independent of and raised above party. In Germany the appointment of

a judge depends, as in Great Britain, on his politics; but he is not, as in Great Britain, taken from amongst those who have already achieved distinction at the Bar. He is not chosen because he is an able man or a brilliant man. Brilliancy would rather go against him. He must above all be a "safe" man, and his promotion depends on his subservience to the powers that be. *Indeed the judiciary is for all practical purposes a branch of the Civil Service, and is not essentially different from any other branch.*

It has often happened in other countries when the expression of free opinions has become dangerous or difficult that independent political thought has taken refuge in the universities. Even in Russia the universities have been a stronghold of Liberalism. In the Germany of the first half of the nineteenth century many a university professor suffered in the cause of political liberty. In the Germany of to-day the universities are becoming the main support of reaction. Professors, although they are nominated by the faculties, are appointed by the Government; and here again the Government only appoints "safe" men. A scholar who has incurred the displeasure of the political authorities must be content to remain a *Privat Dozent* all his life. *The much-vaunted independence of the German professor is a thing of the past.*

They may be independent scientifically; they are not independent politically. It is not that scholars have not the abstract right to speak out, or that they would be dismissed once they have been appointed; rather is it that they would not be appointed or promoted. A young scholar with Radical leanings knows that he will not be called to Berlin.

The German universities still lead political thought; they still wield political influence, and their influence may be even greater to-day than it ever was, but that influence is enlisted almost exclusively on the side of reaction.

And what is true of the universities is true of the Churches. Of the Roman Catholic Church it is hardly necessary to speak. *Non ragionar di lor, ma guarda e passa.* The history of German Catholicism proves once more that the Church is never more admirable than when she is persecuted. During the Kulturkampf the Catholics stood for political liberty, whereas the so-called National Liberals stood for State centralization and political despotism. To-day, from being persecuted, the Catholic Church has become a persecuting Church. She has entered into an unholy compact with the Prussian Government. She has ceased to be religious, and has become Clerical. She has ceased to be universal. She has become narrowly Nationalist. She might have played a glorious part in the new empire.

Instead she has resisted every attempt at financial reform. She might have resisted the oppressive policy against the Poles. Instead she has connived at oppression. She might have opposed the orgies of militarism. Instead she has voted every increase in the army and navy. She has bartered her dignity and spiritual independence to secure confessional privileges, and to get her share in the spoils of office.

The Protestant Churches have not had the same power for evil, yet they have fallen even lower than the Catholic Church. They have lost even more completely every vestige of independence. German university theologians may be advanced in higher criticism, but they are opportunists in practical politics. They are very daring when they examine the divine right of Christ, but they are very timid when they examine the divine right of the king and emperor. Protestantism produced one or two prominent progressive leaders; but they have had to leave their Churches. Dr. Naumann has become a layman; Stöcker, when he espoused the cause of the people, was excommunicated, and the Kaiser hurled one of his most violent speeches against his once favourite Court chaplain.

That speech of the Kaiser illustrates the paradoxical political situation of the Lutheran Churches in Germany. It has come to this,

that in a Protestant country Protestant pastors are not allowed to discharge their duties as citizens, whereas the Government apparently see no objection to having the Catholic priests controlling the politics of the Reichstag. The Catholic priest enjoys a right which is denied to the Protestant clergy, and they enjoy the *right* for no other reason except that they have the *might*.

Both the universities and the Churches having thus betrayed their spiritual mission, can it be said that the Press has acted as a check?

Even in countries where there exists no parliamentary government, the Press has often proved a powerful barrier against absolutism. Such was the function of the Press in Russia under Nicholas the First, and in France under Napoleon the Third. In Germany that check is sadly wanting. There are excellent German papers, like the *Kölnische Zeitung*, the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, and the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, which for intrinsic value are equal to any English paper. But those papers have little power, and they do not represent a large body of public opinion. Indeed, public opinion in Germany is a myth, for it is not organized and it is inarticulate.

German papers are broadly divided into two categories — the “business Press” and the



"political Press." But that distinction is more apparent than real. Both kinds of newspapers are under the influence of the Government, the only difference being that in the one case the influence is direct, in the other case it is indirect. The Government has its favourite inspired channels, its own "reptile" journals, and its Press Bureau. In the provinces the local papers depend on the support of the authorities, as they cannot live without public advertisements. Even in the capital and in the chief provincial centres the newspapers cannot shake off official tyranny, because the Government has the monopoly or indirect control of the news agencies.

But the Government alone cannot be held entirely responsible for the present condition of the Press. We must blame the political apathy of the people, and the political dissensions of the parties. We must not forget that there would be no room for any paper which was mainly political, and was run in the interest of one particular section. Parties are too much divided, and interest in politics is too feeble to provide adequate financial support to any important political paper.

Catholic papers, like the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, less famous but politically much more influential than the *Kölnische Zeitung*, suffer probably less than others from Government interference; but



they can hardly be said to be independent, as they have exchanged the tyranny of the Church for the tyranny of the bureaucracy.

The incongruity of an official Press does not seem to strike the ordinary German mind, and we find so able a writer as General von Bernhardt demanding, as one of the desiderata of the present political situation, a strengthening and extension of the official Press, a more regular supervision, and a more generous support on the part of the Government, *which must see to it that the newspapers shall inculcate sound principles and patriotic feelings in the subjects of the Kaiser.*

It has been left to a Hebrew journalist, Maximilian Harden, to establish the first absolutely independent political paper. Harden is unquestionably the most brilliant, the most original, the most independent, and the most influential journalist of the day. Even in France we do not see his equal. He is to the present generation in Germany what Heine and Boerne were to the second generation of the nineteenth century. Whether *Die Zukunft*, in order to support itself, does not rely too much on sensation and public scandal, and whether in Harden the personal equation is not too predominant are a different matter; but the editor of *Die Zukunft* certainly has made himself a power, or *Machthaber*, of the empire,

and the existence of his paper, even though its colour may come dangerously near the yellow shade, is a sign of the times. And it is one of the most hopeful signs, heralding far-reaching changes in the Constitution of the Vaterland, where political life has now reached its lowest ebb, and where things may have to become worse in order to get better.

## MILITARISM IN GERMANY.

WE are constantly told that the Germans are an essentially pacific people. Friends of Germany in this country quote the reassuring speeches of the Kaiser, the professions of politicians and of publicists, the peace demonstrations of the Socialists. We would fain believe those professions, and those who make them are no doubt sincere. But there are in Germany forces making for war or for warlike feeling which are stronger and more significant than any peace demonstrations. We are not thinking here merely of vested interests, such as the gigantic Krupp and Thyssen factories, the shipbuilding yards of Kiel, the colossal military industries concerned with the production of war material ; nor are we thinking only of the tens of thousands of officers and Junkers who have also a professional interest in war, and who are animated with the war spirit. We are mainly thinking of those subconscious collective instincts and habits—of those deep-seated convictions which supply the decisive motives in the activities of nations as well as of

individuals. Deeds are more important than words, but political institutions, historical traditions, and especially political and moral ideals, are even more important than isolated and ephemeral deeds. It is these, and not the interference of isolated politicians or diplomats, or even of rulers, that in the long run supply the ultimate and decisive motives for collective action.

Now, no one who takes the trouble to study, however superficially, the traditions, the political institutions, the ideals of the Prussian people would be prepared to argue that they are those of a pacific nation. Prussia has lived and moved and had her being in war. The history of Prussia is essentially the history of epoch-making defeats like Jena, and more epoch-making victories like Rossbach and Sedan. In the opinion of the leaders of Prussian thought, in the opinion of university professors, quite as much as in the opinion of the professional soldier, war has been and still is the great civilizing force—the condition of morality in the individual, the source of strength and prosperity in the State.

## I.

In the first place, Prussia is military by historic tradition, and from the very foundation of the monarchy. In the words of Professor Hans

Delbrück she is a *Kriegsstaat*—a war-state. In the words of Freytag, “she is a whole nation of warriors.” There lies her unique originality in the history of civilization. No doubt there have been other military people, like the Russians and the Romans. But in the making of Russia the Greek Orthodox religion has been an even more important force than war. The Romans were a military people, but they were even more emphatically a political people. They were the builders of city and empire, the creators of Law. Every schoolboy knows that, however interesting may be the campaigns of ancient Rome, even more interesting and more important are her internal struggles—the political conflicts between patrician and plebeian, between consuls and tribunes of the people.

Now, in Prussia there have been no such political struggles. The interest of Prussian history is almost exhausted when we have narrated the story of its military campaigns, and the story of the internal preparation and organization in view of those campaigns. The purely political history of Prussia is almost a blank. It has been at most a history of administrative reform, imposed from above and carried out by statesmen like Stein and Hardenberg. We miss the glorious fights for civil rights, the inspiring struggles against despotism, which even the history of

despotic Russia reveals to us. Prussia has produced great heroes on the battlefield ; she has not produced those civic heroes of liberty and martyrs of tyranny ; she has not produced those great popular statesmen, who stand on an even higher plane. As she has no Brutus and no Gracchi, no Cicero and no Cæsar, neither has she any Hampdens or Washingtons, any Cromwells or Mirabeaus. And that is why Prussian history to an outsider is so unspeakably dull and monotonous, so extraordinarily devoid of human interest. That is why even a genius like Treitschke or Carlyle cannot impart life to the national annals. Whereas most educated men know something about the internal history of France and England, or Italy and Russia, few men outside Germany, or outside a small band of specialists, know anything about the military chronicles of the Prussian monarchy.

It is to warfare that Prussia owes her territorial expansion, her place in modern history. It is to warfare that she owes her existence as a State. Without her army Prussia would have remained a barren plain, the mark of Brandenburg, the marsh of Pomerania. With her army she has wrested the eastern borders from Poland, Silesia from Austria, Hanover from its native rulers, Schleswig-Holstein from Denmark, Alsace-Lorraine from France. And just as she



owes to war her existence as a State, she owes to war her supremacy in the empire ; for, strange to say, the average German feels it almost as an offence if you believe in his own political capacity. He accepts it as a dogma that without Prussia he could never have attained to unity—that, without the Prussian wars and without the Prussian leadership, Germany would still be a chaos of heterogeneous states.

Prussia has been a "*Volk in Waffen*"—a nation in arms—to use the expression of von der Goltz. In other countries the king has been mainly a civil ruler. The head of the French Republic is a civilian. Even the head of the War Office is not a soldier. So deep seated is the distrust of militarism that the French President is only one out of many organs of the State. In England, even with a change of dynasty, the nation does not lose its identity. In a country like Prussia the monarchy is the keystone of the political structure. You could not conceive of an army without a war lord. The Hohenzollerns have been the hereditary war lords of Prussia. That is why they are so much more intimately identified with the history of their country than have been, for instance, the Hanoverian kings with the history of England, or the Bourbons with the history of France. Without metaphor, and in the strict sense of the word, the Hohenzollerns have been

the master-builders of the Prussian State, if not of the German Empire.

The *Sieges Allee*—the Alley of Victory—that impressive vista of statues of all the princes, legendary and historical, of the Hohenzollern dynasty in the park of Berlin—is a striking and symbolical representation of the deeds of the royal house of Prussia. The *Sieges Allee* may be an indifferent achievement from the point of view of the sculptor; it may be a caricature of German history in the critical eyes of a scholar; but that intimate association between the Prussian kings and the Prussian State, which is the lesson which William the Second intended to convey in planning the *Sieges Allee*, is in strict conformity with historical fact.

It is indeed difficult fully to realize how intimate that association has been. The modern rationalist would express it in the words of Frederick the Great: "The Prussian king is the first servant of the State." The monarchist of the old school would express it in the words of Louis the Fourteenth: "*L'état c'est moi.*" William the Second prefers to express it in the mystic and biblical phraseology of the "kingship by right divine," of the consecration and dedication of the "Anointed of the Lord."

One fact is certain—namely, that the Prussian monarchy stands alone amongst European States, both in past achievement and present vitality, in

power and majesty. And one understands the feeling of William the First, who obstinately refused in 1871 to accept the Imperial title, because his title as King of Prussia was higher to him and implied far more in political significance than the ornamental and shadowy dignity of a German Kaiser.

In other countries one dynasty has succeeded another—destroyed like the Valois by its own corruption, or swept away like the Stuarts by the tide of revolution. In Prussia one and the same dynasty has ruled from the dawn of national history down to the present day. The Prussian royal title may be recent, and the Prussian kings may be counted amongst the upstarts of royalty, but their political power is of venerable antiquity. The Kaiser of to-day is the lineal descendant of the margraves who defended the marches of Brandenburg against the foreign marauder. And the spiritual identity is no less remarkable than the continuity of the royal succession. However different in temper, the Hohenzollern have all been animated with the same spirit, have professed the same political creed, have nourished the same high ambitions. There was little in common between Frederick the Second and Frederick the Fourth; yet the bigoted ruler who, after the Revolution of 1848, refused the Imperial crown because he would not hold it from the will of the people, is as charac-

teristically Prussian as the sceptical and cynical friend of Voltaire, who surrounded himself with men of letters, who played the flute, and wrote French verse. Again there was little in common between Frederick William the Third and William "the Great"; yet the ill-fated vanquished of Jena had as exalted an idea of the royal prerogative as the Victor of Sedan, who assumed the crown of Charlemagne in the Gallery of Battles of the Palace of Versailles.

The true Hohenzollern is not Frederick the Second, who although engrossed in war throughout his life, yet considered war only as a means to an end. The typical Hohenzollern is his martinet father, the Sergeant King, to whom his army was something so sacred and inviolate that he would never expose it to the hazards of the battlefield; who loved the army like a true artist—that is to say, for art's sake, for its intrinsic beauty, and independently of any practical purpose.

To the true Prussian ruler politics are subordinate to warfare. Art and science are either luxuries—as music and poetry were to Frederick the Second—or they are serviceable tools in the hands of the prince. We know the present attitude of William the Second to the literature of his day. To him poetry exists mainly for the inculcation of patriotism, and for the glorification of the heroic deeds of the Hohenzollern.

Military in its historical tradition, military in its dynasty, Prussia is no less military in its social organization.

In England the army is almost invisible. The officer does not constitute a distinct class in the community. The English officer is as little as possible of a professional soldier. He only dons his uniform when he is on duty. In Prussia the officer is nothing if not professional. He is drawn, in the higher ranks, from the gentry, or Junkertum—for the Prussian nobleman owes military service to his liege. The officer forms a distinct caste—the first in the State, highest in dignity, noblest in the imagination of the common people, most beautiful in the dreams of the German maiden. A young girl in England who is herself, or whose parents are, socially ambitious, will want to marry a country gentleman or a man who has gained distinction in public life. In Germany she will aspire to the hand of an officer.

In Prussia the army is not only the centre of Society life, it is also the avenue to the highest offices, to the most coveted posts at Court and in the diplomatic service; it is even the avenue to the most exalted posts in the civil service. And therefore there is no grievance which rankles deeper in the soul of the German Jew than to be excluded from the higher military ranks. Such is the prestige of the army in Germany



that even those who cannot belong to the active service desire to belong to the Reserve.

Even the student carries to the university the spirit and habits of the regiment; and no student of the upper middle class, who in later life wants to play his part in Society, considers his education complete if he has not fought a duel, if his face is not disfigured by a scar. Foreign critics may blame the custom of the *Mensur* as a relic of barbarism; but it forms part of the military Prussian system, it assists in inculcating the military temper, and it is in accordance with the fitness of things that the present German emperor should have pleaded for its maintenance in every well-ordered university.

## II.

The Prussian monarchy is no less military in its political organization. Prussia remains a *Machtstaat*, not a *Rechtstaat*. Might is the ultimate criterion of political right. And in the last resort the might belongs to the Kaiser. Prussia remains an absolute monarchy. As we saw in a previous chapter there is no parliamentary government, no party system, no Cabinet. The ministers are responsible to the Chancellor, who is responsible to the Kaiser, who is responsible only to God Almighty.



To outward appearance the Reichstag, elected by a semblance of universal suffrage, is a democratic assembly. We have seen in a preceding chapter how deceptive appearances are, and how in reality the Reichstag is a reactionary assembly almost by virtue of the Constitution. The Conservatives have always been in power, and the Opposition is condemned to perpetual impotence. We have seen that the concession of the fiction of universal suffrage was made in order to conciliate the southern States and to coerce recalcitrant princes, and the concession has never led to serious trouble. The Imperial Parliament does not possess even the scanty measure of political rights which the English House of Commons already possessed at the time of the Stuarts. The Reichstag is a talking club. It does not initiate legislation. It may censure, but its censure does not carry any sanction. Its chief duty is to vote military supplies. The Minister of Finance is primarily the Paymaster of the Forces.

There has been for some years a mild agitation in favour of representative government. It gathered force mainly from the blunders of the Government, and from the indiscretions of the Kaiser. In 1908 popular discontent seemed to come to a head. The publication of the famous Imperial interview in the *Daily Telegraph* seemed to rouse the temper of the

people. The War Lord of Germany pledged himself to greater reserve. The Chancellor, Prince von Bülow, retired after an adverse vote of the majority of the Reichstag. Liberal publicists were elated, and proclaimed that this was the dawn of parliamentary government. In reality, Prince von Bülow retired, not because he had ceased to please the Reichstag, but because he had ceased to be acceptable to his Majesty. And so little was the Kaiser concerned about the political crisis, that whilst it was raging he spent one of the gayest holidays of his busy life. And the storm had hardly subsided when, after a few months, William the Second emphatically, and more solemnly than ever, claimed in his Königsberg speech the rights which he held from God Almighty. "*Sic volo, sic jubeo, stet pro ratione voluntas.*" Even in Russia there would have been a rebellion. In Prussia the people once more patiently submitted. The *Preussische Jahrbücher* nodded approval ; and public opinion seemed to admire the Kaiser all the more for his soldierly pluck in asserting his prerogative.

Future historians will tell us that the one moral of the political situation in Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century was supplied by the much-maligned Herr von Oldenburg when, after the *Daily Telegraph* crisis, he advised his Majesty to send his royal soldiers to disperse the unruly assembly.

## III.

Even more remarkable than the reactionary and military constitution of Prussia is the temper of the people who submit to it. From childhood the military virtues of discipline and passive obedience are inculcated in the Prussian citizen. Liberty, equality, fraternity, are the words which arrest our attention in France. *Es ist verboten!* are the words which meet us everywhere in Prussia. The Prussian may be aggressive in the assertion of his claims abroad, but at home he is the most long-suffering of subjects. There does not exist in the wide world a nation which is more pliable, which is more easily governed. Whatever his rulers may do, the Prussian never rises; he rarely agitates, he only occasionally grumbles. And even that right of grumbling—of *nörgling*, to use the expressive German term—has been disputed to poor Michel. In one of his early speeches the German Kaiser called on the *Nörgler* to shake the dust off their feet and to leave the country. The Vaterland had no room for pessimists. The Kaiser was right. He was only following the logic of Prussian institutions. Is not the Prussian State a military organization, and in an army is not the public expression of dissatisfaction the beginning of rebellion?

The ignorant foreigner laughs at the three hundred uniforms of the German Kaiser. They have not learned the philosophy of *Sartor Resartus*, the "Clothes Philosophy" of Carlyle. They do not know the symbolical significance of the uniform in a military state, nor the superstitious reverence of the Prussian for the man with the braided coat and the peaked helmet.

The Koepenick affair, which a few years ago provoked the wonder of the world and contributed to the gaiety of nations, strikingly illustrates that superstitious reverence. To future historians that apparently trivial police court incident gives a deeper insight into Prussian politics than many treatises on constitutional law, and the ingenious burglar showed a deeper understanding of the political psychology of his countrymen than many a Prussian statesman. And therefore the captain of Koepenick is more certain of passing down to posterity than Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg.

The little town of Koepenick is about twelve miles distant from Berlin, on the Upper Spree, near Muggelsee. It possesses about twenty thousand inhabitants, and is one of the favourite excursion resorts of the east end of Berlin. On October 16, 1906, at one o'clock in the afternoon, a captain in uniform appeared at the

rifle range of Plötzensee and commandeered a company of twelve soldiers who had just been relieved from service, ordering them to follow him to the neighbouring town of Koepenick. On arrival, the "captain" ordered them to load their guns and to put on their bayonets ; and to the amazement of the population he occupied with his little troop the town hall, whose issues were carefully guarded. He was acting in virtue of an order from the Emperor's Cabinet, to which the police submitted without making any further explanations. The "captain" ordered the offices of the mayor and treasurer to be opened to him. The population had gathered on the square before the town hall whilst the gendarmes were holding back the crowd. The "captain" ordered the mayor to close his accounts, and to hand over to him the municipal treasury, which amounted to four thousand and two marks. But there was a deficiency of one mark. With the presence of mind which he maintained to the end, the "captain" had a statement drawn up, and ordered the cashier to seal the bag containing the money, which by superior orders he had to remove to Berlin. The mayor and the treasurer were then conducted under military escort to their respective domiciles, where cabs, summoned by the police, were waiting to take them to Berlin. The wife of the mayor refused to be separated from her



husband, and she took a seat with him in the cab. The brigadier of police took a seat in front of them and a grenadier took a place beside the cabman. The same procedure was followed with regard to the treasurer, and the two cabs started for the Berlin army headquarters, where the "captain" arranged to join the prisoners, whilst he himself was leaving by rail. When the cabs stopped in Berlin before the sentry at Unter den Linden, their arrival caused great sensation, and the officer on duty immediately telephoned to headquarters. The commander of Berlin, General von Moltke, arrived at once, and the mystery was discovered. The audacious "captain" had disappeared.

It requires a stretch of imagination which exceeds the power of a jejune Englishman to realize that such an incident should have been possible in a capital of two million people at the beginning of the twentieth century. How is an insular Englishman to conceive of a burglar, merely because he has donned an officer's uniform, entering a town hall in glaring daylight; arresting the mayor and officials; ordering the books and the municipal treasury to be handed over to him; sending the magistrates to prison in a cab; and finally, walking away with the spoils, without having his authority once questioned by the bewildered but obedient municipal officers. In other



countries such an incident would belong to comic opera. In Prussia it reveals the tragedy of despotism, the total absence of political initiative, the perversion of popular character, and the passive obedience of an unpolitical nation which yet claims to rule supreme over the civilized world.

#### IV.

A lover of paradox might plausibly contend that the German Socialist Party furnishes a more convincing proof than any other party of the military character of the Prussian monarchy. For the Prussian Social Democracy possesses in a sublime degree the same military virtues of passive obedience and discipline as the Kaiser's army. The Social Democratic Party is the army of labour, and the authority of "Kaiser Bebel," as he is nicknamed, is as absolute over this army of labour as the Kaiser's majesty over his Junkers. To the same military discipline we must attribute the law-abiding temper of the German Socialist, which is in such striking contrast with the revolutionary temper of Socialist parties everywhere. In other countries, for instance in Belgium, the Social Democratic Party possess as strong an organization as in Germany; but that does not prevent the labourers from rising

against the powers that be. Street riots and barricades are not unfrequent episodes. In the last resort, when the claims which they assert are not granted, when legal means are exhausted, the Socialists appeal to the sanction of force. The Belgian Socialists in 1902 rose against the Conservative Government to secure the abolition of the electoral law and the plural voting system. Regiments were called out, and quelled the popular insurrection after several days' fighting. Only a few weeks ago they rose in spontaneous insurrection to protest against the increase of the Clerical majority at the parliamentary elections.

In Prussia, for forty years, Socialists have protested by all legal means against an electoral law infinitely worse than the plural voting law of Belgium, against a law which even Bismarck proclaimed it necessary to amend. All those Socialist protests have been in vain, and the Prussian electoral law still subsists. Yet the Socialist Party does not rise. Bismarck again and again violated the Constitution of the land. But the Socialists have remained quiet, law-abiding citizens.

At a distance Socialists appear formidable. In reality the Government does not fear them. Socialism is rather to the Prussian Government a useful bugbear to frighten the timid into reaction. Whenever the Social

Democrat raises the red flag, the Government waves the black and white flag of the Hohenzollern. All loyal citizens rally round the Imperial banner, and the army and navy budgets are passed with acclamation. *Without Socialism, reaction in Germany would be in a sorry plight.* With the extreme division of parties in the Reichstag, the Government again and again would come to a deadlock. It is Socialism which supplies the propelling force. Even as in Belgium, where political conditions are very much like the conditions of Germany, the Socialist scare has kept the same Clerical Party in power for the unprecedented period of twenty-eight years, even so in Prussia Socialism has been the mainstay of reaction.

And that is why, although the Socialists have an immense following, they have achieved very little. It is a singular and paradoxical fact that the most drastic Socialist legislation was passed before Socialism had become a party in the Reichstag. No social laws which have been voted for the last twenty years could compare for instance with the State Insurance laws, which were carried through at the very beginning of the present Kaiser's reign. And the reason is obvious. When the Socialist vote was only an insignificant minority, the Social Democrats were still surrounded with the halo and the prestige of terror, and the Government

strained every effort to conciliate them, or to disarm their opposition. But now that the Socialist vote is counted by millions, the German Government have ceased to trouble. They have learned from experience how innocuous and law-abiding are the German "Genossen." They have learned from experience how much worse their bark is than their bite. The Government would indeed have dreaded the Social Democracy if, like the French Syndicalists, they had appealed to force. But the Prussian democracy does not appeal to force. In Prussia it is only the police and the Government that have the sanction of brute force behind them.

## V.

It may be contended that the military traditions and the social and political organization are relics of a distant past, that a new spirit is revealing itself, that old Germany is rapidly passing away. There would be some reason for entertaining such a belief, if the political and moral ideals of the rising generation were not instinct with exactly the same military spirit as the old traditions and institutions. I know that the average journalist does not trouble much about ideals, and that he pays far more attention to a sensational move in the ever-changing chess

game of politics. Yet, once more, if we want to make a reliable forecast of the future, we must not forget that it is ideals which in the long run count most in the practical policy of nations. Political institutions may only be historical survivals, *but ideals always point to the future*. To use Carlyle's expression, "The future is nothing but the 'realized ideal' of the people." Ideals, once they have taken firm possession of the national mind, are the guiding motives, the permanent forces, the lodestars of nations. The whole French Revolution is contained in Rousseau. The whole English Free Trade policy is contained in Adam Smith. English Radicalism is contained in Bentham and in Mill. English Toryism is contained in Burke. It is the moral and political ideals which, together with economic and geographical conditions, make human history.

Now the moral and political ideals of Germany have never been more military, they have never been less pacific than they are to-day. The French people, the English, and even the Russians have long ceased to believe in war as the mainspring of human progress. Whether we take Bentham or Mill, Burke or Stephen, the English ideal is that of an industrial community, of a free commonwealth, not of a military State. The English ideal is that of a *Rechtsstaat*, not of a *Kriegsstaat*.



Some of the most influential political philosophers of England have been under the influence of Darwin, of the doctrine of the struggle for life and the "survival of the fittest." And in our day we see many militarists still adducing Darwin as the exponent of a military philosophy. There could be no more shallow and confused interpretation of the Darwinian theory as applied to human society. For no thoughtful Darwinian would be prepared to admit that the fittest are the most warlike, and that the struggle for life must necessarily take the form of war. On the contrary, a Darwinian would remind us that war is the application of anti-Darwinian principles, and that war, like emigration, by eliminating the young and the brave, tends to the survival of the unfittest. To the English Darwinian philosopher the struggle for life takes many forms ; and the decisive struggle for life in modern humanity is not the external and superficial struggle of the battlefield, but the permanent and deeper internal struggle of the city, of the laboratory, of the workshop, of the home, of the soul, the struggle for political rights or legal rights, the struggle for religious freedom, the economic struggle for a living or for a higher standard of living, the struggle for truth. And therefore the martyr and civic hero is a truer apostle of the Darwinian theory than the soldier.



Such is the political philosophy of the Englishman, which has become the political philosophy of the European. Such also was the political philosophy of old Germany, of Herder and Goethe, of Lessing and Kant. Kant wrote in favour of perpetual peace. Lessing expounded the "*education* of the human race." But not such is the political or moral ideal of modern Germany hypnotized by Prussia. That ideal is based on a totally different *Weltanschauung*. Contemporary German philosophy is a "war philosophy." In France we may find isolated thinkers, like Joseph de Maistre, who are the apostles of war, who maintain that war is a divine and providential institution, one of the eternal verities. In Germany the paradoxes of De Maistre are the commonplaces of historians and moralists. To an Englishman war is a dwindling force, an anachronism. It may still sometimes be a necessity, a *dura Lex*, an *ultima ratio*, but it is always a monstrous calamity. In other words, to an Englishman war is evil, war is *immoral*. On the contrary, to the German war is essentially moral. Indeed, it is the source of the highest morality, of the most valuable virtues, and without war the human race would speedily degenerate. It is the mainspring of national progress. There are three causes which have ensured the present greatness of the German Empire : moral virtue

in the individual, political unity, and economic prosperity. If we were to believe modern theorists, Germany owes all three to the beneficent action of war. Germany is not indebted for its culture to the genius of its writers or artists, but to the iron and blood of its statesmen and warriors. It is the glorious triumvirate of Bismarck, Moltke, and von Roon who have been the master-builders of the Vaterland.

It may be contended that the same "war philosophy" still survives in France, all the preaching of Tolstoy, all Hague Conferences and Peace Congresses notwithstanding. And it may be argued that the universal popularity of Napoleon is in itself a sufficient proof of that military tendency of our age. But the pacific temper of the French people has been again and again demonstrated in recent times, and the worship of Napoleon has little in common with the "war philosophy" of Germany. What appeals to us in the Napoleonic campaigns is the romance of war, its glamour, its pomp and circumstance, the prodigious and unique story of the "Corsican adventurer." And what ennobles the Napoleonic wars is the Revolutionary ideal which they originally carried from one end of Europe to the other, the democratic institutions which the Imperial legions have done so much to spread. And what appeals in

Napoleon himself is the statesman and lawgiver more than the soldier, and the lawgiver more than the statesman, and the man more than either the soldier, the statesman, or the lawgiver. It is the "man of destiny," the super-man, the Titanic personality, the sublime *parvenu*, that makes a universal appeal to the imagination of mankind.

The doctrinaire militarist politics of Mommsen and Treitschke, of von Sybel and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, have nothing to do with the poetic interest which we take in the Napoleonic legend. Whether we are French or English we read the "Memoirs" of Marbot or Ségur, not as we read the "Memoirs" of Frederick the Great, but as we read the battles of the Iliad or of the Nibelungen, as we read the "War and Peace" of Tolstoy. When we read the immortal Russian novel, we do not pause and ponder to consider whether Tolstoy is in favour of war or against war. So little is our interest in the story identified with the pacifist principles of Tolstoy, that in most translations the philosophic part is entirely left out. Now it is exactly the philosophical, the moral significance of war, which arrests the Prussian mind. To him war is not merely a theme for poetry and romance. He does not admire it for its picturesqueness or its dramatic beauty. To him it has an austere grandeur, an intrinsic nobility.

Our main contention then is, that as the

pacific philosophy of Herder and Kant, or Goethe and Lessing provides the key to the old Germany described in Madame de Staël's masterpiece, even so the military philosophy of Mommsen and Treitschke, of Bismarck and Nietzsche gives us the key of modern Prussianized Germany. The whole German people have become Bismarckian, and believe that it is might which creates right. The whole of the younger generation have become Nietzschean in politics, and believe in the will to power, *der Wille zur Macht*. That political philosophy is to-day the living and inspiring ideal which informs German policy. And it is that philosophy which we have to keep constantly in mind if we wish to understand the currents and undercurrents of contemporary politics and make a correct forecast of the future, if we wish to distinguish between what is real and unreal in international relations, between the professions of politicians and the aims and aspirations of the people. German statesmen may protest about their love of peace, but the service they render to peace is only lip service. Peace is only a means, war is the goal. We are reminded of Professor Delbrück's assertion that, considering the infinitely complex conditions of modern warfare, many years of peace are necessary to and must be utilized for the preparation of the wars which are to come.

How, then, can we be reassured by any German pacifist protests and demonstrations? How can we believe that German peace is anything more than a precarious truce as long as German statesmen, German thinkers, German teachers and preachers unanimously tell us that the philosophy of war is the only gospel of salvation? How can a patriotic German, if he is consistent, abstain eventually from waging war when he is firmly convinced that his country owes her political unity, her moral temper, and her Imperial prosperity, whatever she is and whatever she has, mainly to the agency of war? When war has done so much for Germany in the past, will it not do greater things for Germany in the future?

War may be a curse or it may be a blessing. If war is a curse, then the wells of public opinion have been poisoned in Germany, perhaps for generations to come. If war is a blessing, if the philosophy of war is indeed the gospel of the super-man, sooner or later the German people are bound to put that gospel into practice. They must look forward with anxious and eager desire to the glorious day when once more they are able to fight the heroic battles of Teutonism, when they are able to fulfil the providential destinies of the German super-race, the chosen champions of civilization.

## A PRUSSIAN GENERAL ON THE COMING WAR.\*

### I.

As a rule the deliberate military policy of a nation remains the secret of diplomacy and the afterthought of statecraft. As for military feeling and the military spirit, so far as they exist amongst the people, they generally remain subconscious, unreasoned, and instinctive. It is therefore a piece of rare good fortune to the student of contemporary history when the designs of statesmen are carefully thought out and revealed by one who has authority to speak, and when the instinct of the masses is explained and made explicit by one who has the gift of lucid statement, of philosophical interpretation, and psychological insight. It is precisely those qualities and characteristics that give importance and significance to the recent book of General

\* General Friedrich von Bernhardi, "Deutschland und der Nächste Krieg." Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, Stuttgart und Berlin, 1912.



von Bernhardi on "Germany and the Coming War." The author is a distinguished representative of that Prussian Junkertum which forms the mainstay of the military party and which rules the German Empire. He therefore speaks from the inside. And his previous works have earned him a high reputation as an exponent of the science of war, and have worthily maintained the traditions of Clausewitz and Von der Goltz. Nor are these the only qualifications of the author. General von Bernhardi's new book possesses other qualities which entitle him to a respectful hearing. He writes with absolute candour and sincerity; his tone is unexceptionable; he is earnest and dignified; he is moderate and temperate; he is judicial rather than controversial. Although the author believes, of course, that Germany stands in the forefront of civilization and has a monopoly of the highest culture, yet his book is singularly free from the one great blemish which defaces most German books on international politics—namely, systematic depreciation of the foreigner. Von Bernhardi does not assume that France is played out or that England is effete. He is too well read in military history not to realize that to belittle the strength or malign the character of an enemy is one of the most fruitful causes of disaster.

Altogether we could not have a better guide

to the study of the present international situation from the purely German point of view, nor could we find another book which gives us more undisguisedly the "mentality," the prejudices and pre-judgments, and opinions of the ruling classes. And it is a characteristically German trait that no less than one-third of the work should be given to the philosophy and ethics of the subject. General von Bernhardt surveys the field from the vantage-ground of first principles, and his book is a convincing proof of a truth which we have expressed elsewhere that in Prussia war is not looked upon as an accident, but as a law of nature; and not only as a law of nature, but as the law of man, or if not as the law of man, certainly as the law of the "German super-man." It is not enough to say that war has been the national industry of Prussia. It forms an essential part of the philosophy of life, the *Weltanschauung* of every patriotic Prussian. Bernhardt believes in the morality, one might almost say in the sanctity, of war. To him war is not a necessary evil, but, on the contrary, the source of every moral good. To him it is pacificism which is an immoral doctrine, because it is the doctrine of the materialist, who believes that enjoyment is the chief end of life. It is the militarist who is the true idealist because he assumes that humanity can only achieve its

mission through struggle and strife, through sacrifice and heroism. It is true that Bernhardt ignores the greatest of Prussian philosophers, whose immortal plea in favour of perpetual peace is dismissed as the work of his dotage. But if he dismisses Kant, he adduces instead a formidable array of thinkers and poets in support of his militarist thesis; Schiller and Goethe, Hegel and Heraclitus in turn are summoned as authorities. Even the Gospels are distorted to convey a militarist meaning, for the author quotes them to remind us that it is the warlike and not the meek that shall inherit the earth. But Bernhardt's chief authorities are the historian of the super-race, the Anglophile Treitschke, and the philosopher of the super-man, Nietzsche. Nine out of ten quotations are taken from the political treatises of the famous Berlin professor, and the whole spirit of Bernhardt's book is summed up in the motto borrowed from Zarathustra and inscribed on the front page of the volume:—

"War and courage have achieved more great things than the love of our neighbour. It is not your sympathy, but your bravery, which has hitherto saved the shipwrecked of existence.

"'What is good?' you ask. To be brave is good."

(NIETZSCHE'S, "Thus spake Zarathustra," First Part, 10th Speech.)

It is no less characteristic of contemporary

German political philosophy that from beginning to end Bernhardi maintains consciously, deliberately, a purely national attitude, and that he does not even attempt to rise to a higher and wider point of view. Indeed the main issue and cardinal problem, the relation of nationality to humanity, the conflict between the duties we owe to the one and the duties we owe to the other, is contemptuously relegated to a footnote (p. 19). To Bernhardi a nation is not a means to an end, a necessary organ of universal humanity, and therefore subordinate to humanity. A nation is an end in itself. It is the ultimate reality. And the preservation and the increase of the power of the State is the ultimate criterion of all right. "My country, right or wrong," is the General's whole system of moral philosophy. Yet curiously enough Bernhardi speaks of Germany as the apostle not only of a national culture, but of universal culture, as the champion of civilization, and he indulges in the usual platitudes on this fertile subject. And he does not even realize that in so doing he is guilty of a glaring contradiction ; he does not realize that once he adopts this standpoint of universal culture, he introduces an argument and assumes a position which are above and outside nationalism. For either the German nation is self-sufficient, and all culture is centred in and absorbed in Germany, in which

case Prussian nationalism would be historically and philosophically justified ; or culture is something higher and more comprehensive and less exclusive, in which case national aims must be estimated and appraised with reference to a higher aim, and a national policy must be judged according as it furthers or runs counter to the universal ideals of humanity.

General von Bernhardi starts his survey of the international situation with the axiom that Germany imperatively wants new markets for her industry and new territory for her sixty-five millions of people. In so doing, he only reiterates the usual assumption of German political writers. And he also resembles the majority of his fellow publicists in this respect that he does not tell us what exactly are the territories that Germany covets, or how they are to be obtained, or how the possession of tropical or sub-tropical colonies can solve the problem of her population. But he differs from his predecessors in that he clearly realizes and expresses, without ambiguity or equivocation, that the assertion of her claims must involve the establishment of German supremacy, and he admits that those claims are incompatible with the antiquated doctrine of the balance of power. And von Bernhardi also clearly realizes that, as other nations will refuse to accept German supremacy, and to surrender those fertile territories which Germany needs,



German expansion can only be achieved as the result of a conflict—briefly, that war is unavoidable and inevitable.

First of all a war with France. And here again, in expressing his conviction that Germany must primarily settle accounts with the French people, the Prussian General involves himself in a curious contradiction. He tells us that Germany wants war because she wants an expansion of power and territory, which could only be obtained as the prize of victory. He ought, therefore, to accept, like a true disciple of Bismarck and Nietzsche, the full responsibility of the war. He ought to have the courage of his convictions. But the General has not that courage, and he refuses to incur that responsibility. He proceeds at once to shift the burden on to the French people, and he tells us that France ultimately must be held accountable, because France is still animated with the spirit of revenge, with the desire to avenge Metz and Sedan, and to recover her lost provinces.

Now, whoever knows the state of public opinion in France also knows that the assertion of the General is absolutely contrary to fact, and that the French people will only fight if they are attacked. No doubt they will fight with grim determination if driven into war; no doubt they will not allow themselves to be dispossessed of any part of their colonial empire



simply because Germany wants an outlet for her population ; but it is certain that France will never be the aggressor, that she will never initiate a war either for revenge, or for honour, or for lust of territory. She will refuse to be the aggressor, not only because the stakes are too high and the country too rich and prosperous, but because a war, whether successful or unsuccessful, would be fatal to the ruling classes of the Third Republic : if unsuccessful, the Republic would be swept away in the disaster ; if successful, the victorious general would establish a dictatorship or restore the monarchy.

Even as Bernhardt thinks a war with France unavoidable, so he believes that a war with England cannot be warded off. And here once more, with strange inconsistency and lack of moral courage, he would like to relieve his countrymen of a formidable responsibility. In his opinion it is England that is determined to attack Germany and to annihilate her fleet and her trade. But here again any one acquainted with the trend of public opinion in England knows that von Bernhardt is ludicrously wrong in assuming that England will gratuitously attack her neighbour. The writer himself admits that until 1902 the very possibility of a war with Germany had never entered the brain of an English statesman, whereas it is a bare fact that the probability of a war with England has

occupied for forty years the thoughts of leading German historians and politicians. In one sense it is true that if German policy is really what he assumes it to be, Prussian diplomacy may so "shuffle the cards" that England may be compelled to take the initiative of war. And Bernhardt is right in assuming that England might be driven into war, not only to repel an attack against her own shores, but to repel a wanton attack against France. England may have to wage war to maintain that very balance of power which the Prussian general dismisses so contemptuously as an exploded principle of policy. Many will agree that in such an event, England, in fighting for herself, would fight once again for European liberty. As in the days of Philip the Second, of Louis the Fourteenth, and Napoleon, England may have to defend once again the independence of the European continent. The English reader will have difficulty in repressing a smile when, by a curious inversion of parts, the gallant General claims for his own country this glorious position of champion of European liberty. For is it not, so he argues, the English mastery of the sea which is threatening the independence of all nations? And he does not hesitate to urge this strange plea for the German Empire at the very same moment when he claims for the German Empire the undisputed supremacy of

the Continent.\* Verily Prussian patriotism does lead its apostles to adopt strange readings of European history.

## II.

Assuming the war with France and England to be inevitable, von Bernhardi realizes that the conflagration cannot be restricted to those two countries. Not only would the allies of the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance be drawn in, but even the small neutral countries would not escape. Nations like Belgium, Holland, and Denmark could not possibly remain disinterested spectators, for Denmark would have to keep the gates of the Baltic open to the German fleet and keep them shut to the British fleet. If she did not consent to this, her territory would have to be occupied. Copenhagen would have to be bombarded as it was during the Napoleonic wars. And in the same way Belgium and Holland would have to keep the mouths of their rivers open to German traffic to supply Germany with foodstuffs, and to carry on German trade under a neutral flag. If they did not discharge that vital function they would have to be conquered. In short, even assuming England to retain the

\* It is true that in his new interpretation of European history, Napoleon was, as against England, the champion of European liberty.

mastery of the sea, every move of England on the sea would have to be answered by a German conquest on the Continent.

The war of to-morrow, therefore, will not be like the war of 1870, a war confined to two belligerent forces : it will be a universal European war. Nor will it be a humane war, subject to the rules of international law, and to the decrees of the Hague Tribunal : it will be an inexorable war ; or, to use the expression of von Bernhardi, it will be "a war to the knife." Nor will it be decided in a few weeks like the war of 1870 : it will involve a long and difficult campaign, or rather a succession of campaigns ; it will mean to either side political annihilation or supremacy.

General von Bernhardi legitimately assumes that a war so momentous, so decisive, in which the whole future of his country is at stake, must be anxiously prepared for in every detail. And the preparation must be twofold : diplomatic and national.

The diplomatic preparation can be summed up in one sentence : it must aim both at strengthening the Triple Alliance and at weakening the Triple Entente.

With regard to the weakening of the Triple Entente, von Bernhardi does not seem to be very hopeful. Recent events in Morocco have shown that it will not be easy to separate France

and England. It is true, on the other hand, that at the Potsdam Conference, German diplomacy succeeded in driving a wedge between France and Russia. But any *rapprochement* between Germany and Russia can only be temporary and precarious. The interests of the two *Governments* may be identical in both countries, because there is a solidarity and complicity of despotism, but the interests of the two nations are absolutely opposed, and the Slav feeling in Germany, as in Austria and in Russia, is every year growing more bitter against the Teuton.

German diplomacy must therefore devote itself mainly to strengthening the Triple Alliance, and this can only be done by two means: first, by consolidating the bond with Italy; and secondly, by securing the support of young Turkey, and thus transforming the Triple Alliance into a Quadruple Alliance.

The existing alliance with Italy has, unfortunately for Germany, been loosened by the Franco-Italian understanding, and by the Tripolitan War, and it is permanently endangered by Italy's determination to recover Trieste and the other Italian-speaking parts of the Austrian Empire. In order to be linked for ever to Austria and Germany, Italy must, therefore, be made to give up her irredentist aspirations. If Italy were ever to become an Adriatic Power, she would sooner or later come



into conflict with Austria. On the contrary, if Italy could be made a Mediterranean Power, she would necessarily come into conflict with France and England. It must therefore be the constant endeavour of Austro-German diplomacy to divert Italian ambitions from the Adriatic to the Mediterranean, from the Eastern towards the Southern shores. And there are many signs to-day which indicate that the preaching of General von Bernhardt is meeting with an all too ready hearing in Italy. An influential Nationalist section of the Italian people is bent on securing for Italy the possession of Tunis and Algeria, and on restoring in favour of Italy the ancient Mauretanian Empire of the Romans. These Mauretanian conquests shall be the prize of the Italian alliance with Germany and Austria in the coming war.

The consolidated Triple Alliance must be still further strengthened by the adherence of Turkey. Von Bernhardt is perfectly right in assuming that a Turkish alliance would be of supreme advantage to Germany. The chief Mohammedan Power, if it took sides against England, would rouse the religious fanaticism of the Mussulman population of Egypt and India, and part of the British fleet might have to be diverted from Northern waters to quell a rebellion in the East. And there is considerable danger that Turkey may be dragged into



the Quadruple Alliance. As I have attempted to prove elsewhere, Germany is every day strengthening her grip of the Turkish Empire. But we may still hope that the Turks may see in time that a war with England would be suicidal, for although the Kaiser has proclaimed himself the protector of three hundred million Mohammedans, it is more than doubtful whether he would be able to help them in their hour of need. In the present Tripolitan War, as well as in the Moroccan imbroglio, Turkey has had solemn warnings, and has been made to realize how little she can rely on German promises or on German support. Not to mention the danger arising from Russia, Constantinople would be at the mercy of a British fleet. Turkey would risk complete annihilation for the doubtful advantage of becoming, in case of victory, a German protectorate.

### III.

If the views of General von Bernhardi's *Realpolitik* in matters of foreign policy are often unreal and fantastic, and do not resist the most superficial examination, it must be granted that he does not overrate their importance. After all, the issue of the coming war will not rest with the diplomats, but with the Ger-

man nation. For the "coming war" will be pre-eminently a national war, and must be met by national preparations. Victory can only be secured if every German citizen rises to the emergency, submits to the necessary sacrifices, and if the German State has the foresight and energy to make adequate financial, technical, and political preparations.

With regard to the financial preparation, the great danger lies in the stinginess of the Reichstag. Its guiding principle seems to be that current military expenditure must be met from the ordinary revenue. Such a principle might be legitimate enough in ordinary times, but in critical times, such as those in which we are living, extraordinary needs must be met by extraordinary means—that is to say, by loans. The resources of the German taxpayer are very far from having reached their extreme limit. Whereas England pays for her army and navy twenty-nine marks per head of the population, Germany only pays sixteen. England has always set an example to other nations in administering her finances wisely and cautiously, and at the same time in providing liberally for the defences of the country. Let Germany imitate the example of England in both respects. The wars of the Revolution and the Empire were not paid out of the ordinary revenue, and after a hundred and twenty years the English tax-

payer is still paying off the enormous debt accumulated at the end of the eighteenth century. Yet English statesmen acted with supreme wisdom in thus burdening the future in order to secure a victory. For defeat would have mortgaged the future of the people far more than the heaviest loan.

In discussing the technical preparation for the coming war, General von Bernhardt warns his countrymen against blindly accepting some universally prevalent assumptions, and especially the assumption that victory will be mainly ensured by sheer weight of numbers. And here, unexpectedly enough, the militarist is almost found to agree with the pacifist. The General strongly protests against the odious rivalry in armaments and the superstitious belief in big battalions. He reminds us that in the past victories have always been achieved by minorities. History has proved by examples innumerable that masses have only been a decisive factor in war when the adversaries were equal in all other respects, or when "the numerical superiority of one army exceeded the measure and proportion which is fixed by the law of numbers." But in most cases it was a particular advantage on one side—better equipment, superior valour of the troops, superiority in command or superiority in the motives of action—which ultimately secured victory even against overwhelming

odds. Rome conquered the world with minorities. Frederick the Great with minorities defended himself against the Powers of Europe allied against him. Quite recently the Japanese army triumphed over adversaries enormously superior in numbers.

Not only will victory not be decided by numbers, but numbers may prove a positive danger, for the greater the masses, the smaller the technical value of the troops. Unwieldy armies not only make far greater demands on the commanders and presuppose far greater organizing power, but they are also far more difficult to move, and mobility on the battlefield is one of the essential conditions of success.

Quality, then, is far more important than quantity. In the infinitely complicated war of to-morrow, which will be full of surprises, everything will depend on the fighting qualities of the unit, on the initiative of the soldier—on the “personal equation” of the individual. And those indispensable military qualities can only be acquired by protracted service. At present universal service exists only in name, and the present German Government has tried to replace it by increasing to an enormous extent the reserve forces. Von Bernhardi has little faith in the reserve for offensive purposes, and he leaves us in no doubt as to his opinion by calling the reserve “a military proletariat.”

It is interesting to compare Bernhardi's views with those of one of the ablest parliamentary leaders and publicists of Germany. Dr. Friedrich Naumann has emphasized the fundamental differences between the war of yesterday and the war of to-morrow, and has pointed out what will be the chief difficulties the military command will have to contend with.

"The war of the future is a problem of economic organization of the most difficult nature and the highest technical achievement, such as has never been hitherto demanded from any army. The old military qualities must give way to the organizing qualities. No doubt the courage and endurance of the individual soldier must remain for all times the foundation of military power, but organizing genius is required in order not to waste that courage and endurance. This is clearly shown from a mere examination of the colossal numbers engaged. To transport, to locate, and to feed these masses of men is the daily preoccupation of the military authorities. That they rightly understand the nature of the problem is certain, *but it is very doubtful whether the problem can ever be adequately solved by commanders who are recruited from the Junkertum.* Mere military capacity does not suffice here. Both enemies and friends admit that our corps of officers possess such military capacity. Anxiety only arises with regard to their other qualifications. We know that our nation possesses in its industries successful organizers, brains accustomed to direct great quantities of material and 'personnel'—men who create new conditions of life for whole economic districts without having to appeal to any mystical authority. As democratic politicians we may often have to oppose bitterly those captains of industry, but if it comes to war we shall be



willing to be led by them, because we know that they have the brains. It is true that they must not meddle with the technical duties of the officers, but the administration of the war material must be their province. And even with regard to the technique of war, it becomes from year to year more questionable whether this can be managed more efficiently by a corps of noblemen than by the representatives of middle-class technique. However much we may value the moral qualities of the old ruling class—and, with all political differences of opinion, we shall not minimize those qualities—we must admit that we are witnessing a transformation of methods of attack and defence which in addition to the old question of iron discipline raises the modern question: how far shall we be able on the battlefield to replace the human unit through machinery? It is obvious that this will never succeed completely, for there does not exist a machine which does not need a human soul to work it. At the same time it is doubtless that in this direction mighty changes are at hand. We can see here a repetition of the process which we notice in nearly all industries—the subordination and displacement of human labour in mines, machines, and means of transport. If you examine a weaving mill you shall find comparatively few men: the whole place is already full of the produce of labour which has been accomplished elsewhere. Even so in war: the front ranks must be supplied with human units in as limited a quantity as possible; but those units must have the mechanical ability in the blood. Those conditions do already exist to a large extent in naval warfare. Ships are built and equipped with an insignificant number of men compared to their fighting power. But those men must work like animated machines. Even so the air fleet of to-morrow will demand a large amount of technical application and technical ability, but very few military units. War is becoming impersonal, and is becoming reduced to a



rivalry of money and economics. That even here military members of the nobility may achieve great results is shown by the admirable example of Count Zeppelin. But the impression remains that there still survive in the army the traditions of the pre-industrial age—traditions not only of loyalty and discipline, but also of technical ignorance. We have still too much of the parade soldier whose knees are more pliable than his fingers or his brain. The industrializing of the army is coming, but very slowly. It begins with the artillery, but it ends at the cavalry. We have still failed fully to realize that under a system of universal service a nation pays and labours in order that its weapons shall be absolutely of the first class. The nation which can put the best technique into the military service will probably, in the altered conditions of modern warfare, achieve victory."

Whether Dr. Naumann is right or wrong, there can be no doubt that General von Bernhardt studiously avoids the tremendous economical and organizing issues raised by modern warfare; and the reason probably is that he could not have done so without trespassing on the province of controversial politics. He would have had to examine whether the patriarchal and feudal régime in Germany is calculated to encourage that organizing genius and that technical preparation which, according to Dr. Naumann, will be so vital in the war of the future.

## IV.

We do not feel qualified to discuss the technical merits of Bernhardt's proposals, but with regard to his plan of campaign we draw special attention to the two chapters on the naval part. The *Leitmotiv* of those chapters is that German naval strategy will have to be mainly defensive. But although the German navy will have to fight under the cover of her coast defences, she may utilize the favourable opportunity to make surprise attacks on the British fleet. Nor must we forget that the German army will be able to co-operate with the naval defences. After all, the ultimate issues of the campaign in the future, as in the past, must depend on the land forces; and it is on the Continent, in France or Belgium, that the decisive battles will be fought.

Precisely because the final issue will largely depend on the personality of the soldier, the moral and civic preparation must be at least as important as the technical, and here the Government has an important part to play through the school and through the Press. *Both the school and the Press must both persistently emphasize the meaning and the necessity of war as an indispensable means of policy and of culture, and*

must inculcate the duty of personal sacrifice. To achieve that end the Government must have its own popular papers, whose aim it will be to stimulate patriotism, to preach loyalty to the Kaiser, to resist the disintegrating influence of Social Democracy.

But not least important is the political preparation for the war. Statesmanship and diplomacy confine themselves too much to consolidating alliances and entering into new understandings. Nothing could be more dangerous than to rely too much on treaties and alliances. Alliances are not final. *Agreements are only conditional.* They are only binding, *rebus sic standibus*, as long as conditions remain the same—as long as it is in the interest of the allies to keep them; for nothing can compel a state to act against its own interest, and there is no alliance or bond in the world which can subsist if it is not based on the mutual advantage of both parties. It is therefore essential that the war shall be fought under such conditions that it shall be in the interest of every ally to be loyal to his engagements; and therefore it is essential for the State so to direct and combine political events as to produce a conjuncture of interests and to provoke the war at the most favourable moment.

There seems to prevail the idea that Germany ought on no account to take the offen-

sive. For ten pages von Bernhardi strongly opposes that popular assumption, and urges the necessity for Germany to take the initiative. He protests against a timorous and expectant policy; there may be in the history of the nation moments so critical that it becomes the duty of the rulers to take the initiative.

"Wherever we open the book of history we find everywhere evidence of the fact that wars begun with virile decision at the right moment have produced, politically as well as socially, the happiest results. On the contrary, political weakness has only produced misery, because the statesman lacked the decision to take upon himself the responsibility of a necessary war, because he expected to bring about by diplomatic negotiations the solution of irreconcilable conflicts.

"The Great Elector has laid the corner-stone of Prussian power by successful offensive wars. Frederick the Great has laid the corner-stone of Prussian power by successful offensive wars, and has followed the traces of his glorious ancestor. He noticed how his state hovered in an untenable intermediate position between that of a petty principality and that of a Great Power, and he showed himself determined to give a decisive character to this ambiguous existence. The aggrandizement of his territory had become a necessity if Prussia wanted to exist on a business footing and bear its royal name with honour. The king saw this political necessity, and took the bold decision to challenge Austria. *None of the wars which he waged were forced upon him.* None did he postpone to the last extremity. Always he reserved it to himself to initiate the attack, to forestall his adversaries, and to secure the most favourable chances."

"The great art of politics," says Frederick the Great, "is not to swim against the stream, but to turn every condition to one's own advantage." The art of politics consists much more in utilizing favourable conjunctures than in preparing for those conjunctures. Cleverness is better calculated to preserve what one already possesses ; *boldness alone is capable of adding to one's possessions*. When Frederick heard the news of the Emperor Charles the Sixth's death, he said to his privy councillors : "I will submit a problem to you. When one has an advantage over one's opponent, must one or must one not utilize it ?"

This necessity for Germany to abandon a "timorous and expectant policy" is the *Leitmotiv* of von Bernhardi's book. "In a bold initiative lies our salvation to-day as much as in the times of Frederick the Great. We must look at this truth with a clear eye."

"It may be objected, no doubt, that an aggression on the part of Germany might produce an unfavourable position by bringing about those very conditions under which the Franco-Russian alliance would come into force. If we did attack France or Russia, either ally would be compelled to come to the rescue, and we would find ourselves in a much worse position than if we had only to combat one adversary. *It must therefore be the duty of our diplomacy so to shuffle the cards as to compel France to attack us*. We might then expect that Russia might remain neutral.



*"One thing is certain, we shall not determine France to attack us by mere passive waiting. Neither France nor Russia nor England need attack us to obtain what they want. As long as we are afraid to be the aggressors, they can, through diplomatic means, subject us to their will, as has been proved by the recent Moroccan events. And therefore, if we wish to bring about an attack on the part of our enemies we must initiate a political action which, without attacking France, yet will hurt her interests, and those of England, so severely that both states will feel obliged to attack us. The possibilities for such a procedure present themselves as well in Africa as in Europe."*

## V.

With these unmistakable and ominous words of the Prussian General we conclude our examination of his book, for they convey its most instructive lesson and they express its main significance.

It cannot be said that, so far as the probable issue of the coming war is concerned, the author has lifted the veil which hides the future from us. Rather has he made darkness more visible. Precisely in emphasizing that the moral factor will be the decisive one, he has deepened the mystery and uncertainty, because moral forces cannot be calculated. And the very fact that the "coming war" will be one of life and death is in favour of France, for it ought to inspire the French with the courage of despair.



The interest and importance of the book, therefore, is not due to any fresh light which it throws on the military problem. Rather is it due to the vivid light which it throws on the state of public opinion in Germany, and especially on the "mentality" of those in high places. The General has spoken with the frankness of the soldier, and not with the reticence of the diplomat. The British people will be grateful to the gallant soldier for his candour, however cynical. They will remember some of his admissions and some of his indiscretions, and they will perhaps be less inclined to political optimism—less inclined to assume that the present differences between Germany and England are to be removed by international courtesies, by Parliamentary visits and banquets, or that the present difficulties will be solved by a policy of passive acquiescence and blissful repose.

## NATIONALISM IN GERMANY AND THE PERVERSION OF PATRIOTISM.

THE erroneous political philosophy which in Germany has produced the prevailing militarism has also resulted in a perverted, exclusive, and aggressive nationalism. Whereas England has slowly extricated herself from the shackles of a narrowing and insular patriotism, and has risen to a higher and nobler conception of a free empire, the German people still continue to worship the old heathen idols of jingoism.

### I.

There is no task which is more urgently needed to-day than a careful and systematic working out of a true philosophy of patriotism, and a searching criticism of the current political ethics, mainly in their international aspects. The most confused notions continue to prevail on the relations of one nation to another, on the relations of nationality to

humanity, on our respective duties to the one and to the other. Yet those questions are not only of vital philosophical value, but also of far-reaching practical importance, for on the answer which we shall give to them must depend in many cases the issues of peace and war.

We seem to take our moral philosophy from two entirely different sources, according as it is concerned with private or with public life. Our private morality we take from the Gospels, but our public morality we take from paganism. In the one we recognize the jurisdiction of Christ; in the other we proclaim our allegiance to Cæsar. Once we have crossed the national frontier, our neighbour ceases to be a fellow-Christian; he becomes a foreigner and an alien, and in our relations to him we obey a different moral code. Virtues and vices change names; collective egotism is dignified into the virtue of patriotism; deceit, lying, double-dealing, which would dishonour a private citizen, are dignified into principles: the Will to Power, or the *raison d'état*. Greed and pride, which in private life would be cardinal sins, become political virtues, and assume the disguise of a noble ambition and a high sense of honour.

Patriotism, therefore, very far from being the simple and obvious idea which we assume it to be, is essentially complex and contradictory. If

it has inspired the most heroic deeds, it has also been perverted to the most ignoble uses. And the moral perversion is based on an intellectual confusion. And as this intellectual confusion arises from the fact that we fail to distinguish the different elements which it contains, our first task must be one of careful dissociation and analysis.

In its primary sense patriotism is the love of our native country. It is a beneficent provision of nature by which the barren plains and bleak climates of the North inspire as passionate a devotion in man as the smiling vineyards and the radiant sunshine of the South. The moral idea need not enter into this elemental love. It is born of habit and instinct, of association and adaptation, and we deserve no credit for it. As Montaigne already remarked in the sixteenth century, the "savages of Scotland do not care for the gardens of Touraine." We do not love our country because it is beautiful or wealthy; we love it because it is our native country.

In another and wider sense, and considered from the point of view of the community and not from the point of view of the individual, patriotism is mainly the instinct of self-preservation. It is the collective instinct which compels the citizen to rise in defence of his country when it is threatened by a foreign invader. It is the same feeling which animated the Red

Indians to defend their virgin forests against the "pale-face" intruder, and which during the great Revolution sent fourteen armies to the frontier. This patriotism, again, is not in itself a moral virtue. Rather is it an organic necessity. It is a spontaneous vital reaction of the community. It may lead to heroic deeds, just as maternal love inspires the most sublime sacrifice even in jackals and tigers. Very frequently it is conducive to the most flagrant violation of right. It is often only a pretext to invade and despoil our neighbours. Patriotism, as has been said, is often the last refuge of a scoundrel.

But in our complicated and artificial civilization it is but seldom that we meet patriotism in its primitive and instinctive forms. It is generally mixed up with other elements. It is not only the spontaneous love of the individual for the country of his birth—it is not only the spontaneous reaction of the community in time of danger—patriotism becomes an absolute principle, an ideal of public duty, the most comprehensive of virtues.

It is at this point, when we try to dissociate the natural and instinctive elements and the moral and artificial elements which enter into the composition of patriotism, that one difficulty after another arises to confront us. Why should we owe a duty to the nation merely as such,

and what is the moral foundation of nationality? Why should we necessarily consider a nation as an Absolute, as a moral personality, when it is often only a geographical expression, or a state based on physical force, or a territory which may be merely the spoils of conquest? And why should there be a double and often contradictory morality? Why should the moral law which guides us in private life cease to guide us in public life? And even though our country may have a right in the hour of danger to claim the sacrifice of our lives, why should it also have a right to claim the surrender of our moral conscience? And ought not the national ideal be kept in strict subordination to the higher ideals of humanity?

If we examine the different answers which have been given to those questions we shall find them equally wrong. The answer of the man in the street is superficial or immoral; the answer of the philosopher is inadequate and unreal.

The general assumption which underlies the argument of the philosopher is that we can only realize our highest moral ideals in the State and through the State, and that in the State we live and move and have our being. But this assumption demands considerable qualification, and is mainly a survival of antiquity. It is derived from a time when the State—the



Politeia or Civitas—absorbed all the activities, temporal and spiritual, of the citizen; when the State was indeed the source of all human morality, of human knowledge and human art. But Christianity has broken up the ancient State, and has divested it of most of its moral, religious, and artistic attributes. Christianity has given us a divided duty. It has introduced the internal and eternal struggle between the City of Man and the City of God. Modern thought has completed the disintegrating process, and to-day, in addition to the conflict between the selfish individual impulses and the duty which we owe to the State, we are distracted between the claims of the narrow national activities and the wider human activities. So far is the State from being the foundation of morality, that moral progress has generally been obtained in defiance of national law; so far is the national state from entirely absorbing our activities, that all the highest activities of man—art, science, and religion—are to-day not national but international.

The classical doctrine, then, provides far too narrow a foundation for modern patriotism and modern nationality. It does not take into account the subtle and complex changes which have passed over the modern world; it does not enlighten us on the manifold conflicts of our divided duties.

On the other hand, can it be said that the popular conception of patriotism is any more satisfactory than the abstract doctrines of philosophers? Is the wisdom of the people wiser than the wisdom of the theorist? Shall we find a more secure foundation for patriotism in any assumed superiority of culture of one nation over another?

Is the Hungarian patriot justified in forcing the Magyar culture on the Croatian and Roumanian people simply because in his opinion Magyar culture is superior? Is a Russian and Prussian patriot justified in imposing Russian and Prussian culture upon the Polish nation because they are assumed to be superior to Polish culture? Would England be justified in imposing English culture on the South African Dutch because English culture is assumed to be superior to the Dutch?

In reply to that argument we assert that the superiority of any one culture cannot possibly be proved. On the contrary, it can be proved that no such superiority does exist; and even if it did exist, it could not justify outside interference.

Our first contention is that no absolute superiority of one civilized people over another can be proved. Experience shows that any assumption of superiority is purely subjective and arbitrary, and is invariably challenged by a

contrary assumption on the part of other nations. Not only every great nation but every small nation brings forward the same claims, and is equally proud of its historic achievements. Italians and Spaniards, Dutchmen and Belgians, Danes and Swedes, Russians and Germans, Englishmen and Frenchmen, all boast equally of their superior culture.

And our second contention is that if the superiority of one nation over another cannot be proved, it is for the simple reason that such superiority does not exist. For where would be the final criterion of such superiority? Would it be in the realm of thought or in the realm of action? Would it be in science or in religion, in painting or in music, in commerce or in politics? No nation is superior to another nation in every one of those activities, and it is impossible to assert which of those activities is more important than the other. As the result of a natural law and of a universal law which we shall presently examine, in virtue of the law of economy and the law of compensation, we generally find that in proportion as one nation is superior in one activity it will be inferior in another direction. If the Englishman may claim superiority in politics, the German may claim superiority in music, in art, or in philosophy.

And our third contention is that, even if the superiority of one nation could be proved, it

would not justify that aggressive policy which is the policy recommended by the average patriot. Because the German is superior to the Pole or to the Tchech it does not justify him in depriving the Tchech or the Pole of their land or their language or their political rights, not only because the Pole might one day himself become superior, if he were allowed to expand, but simply because moral or political superiority cannot be imparted by force—simply because in oppressing the Pole the Prussian would not improve the Pole, but would himself deteriorate below the level of the Pole. Violence demoralizes both the people who use it and the people against whom it is being used.

There may be extreme cases where outside interference is justified, as in the case of the colonization of a degraded race by a demonstrably superior race, as in the case of the domination of a white race over a coloured race. But even if we assume that the rule of the white race over a coloured race invariably benefits the black or the yellow race, such interference is irrelevant to the argument of patriotism. The Englishman does not interfere in Africa or in Asia mainly in order to introduce English civilization: he interferes in the name of our common Christianity and humanity. In India, after one hundred and fifty years of rule, the English do not think themselves justified in

forcing upon the natives specific English institutions like representative government or trial by jury. Nor have they even used their political power to introduce Christianity. The right of intervention in the case of inferior races is not limited to one nation—it is a right, and indeed a duty, which is supposed to be common to all Western powers. It is the duty of the white man, who claims this additional burden, because he is stronger to bear it. So true is this that the colonization and evangelization of the dark places of the earth—the “partition” of Africa and of Asia—has been arranged in our days by international agreements. It has not been claimed as the sole right or duty or “providential” mission of one supreme Power.

We must therefore seek elsewhere for the moral foundations of patriotism. We must seek other reasons to justify the principle of nationality, and we shall find that those reasons are exactly the opposite of the reasons which are generally advanced. The ultimate moral reason for the existence and maintenance of those political units which we call nationalities lies not in the exclusive superiority of any nation, but, on the contrary, in the limitations which are incidental to every nation. We believe in nationality, not because any one nation has monopolized all the virtues, but because no nationality can possibly monopolize or has



monopolized all the virtues ; because each nation has only received certain specific gifts ; and because other nations and other conditions are required to develop other gifts which may be equally important. We believe in nationality, not in order that all nations shall be made similar—not in order that there may be established one abode of political perfection, one ideal commonwealth—but because in God's universe there must be many mansions.

And we prefer the diversity of nationalities rather than the uniformity of a universal Roman Empire for the same reasons which make us prefer the varied landscape of coast and mountain rather than the uniform level of one vast plain, however rich and fertile. We prefer the diversity of nationality for exactly the same reasons which make us prefer individuality and personality rather than the sameness of an abstract type. As no climate or country can produce all the fruits of the earth, so no single nation can produce all the fruits of culture. As the English soil does not produce grapes, so the English temperament does not produce plastic art, and has left it to the southern nations to create the divine harmonies of music. England is a great civilization ; but, great as it is, it is not complete.

Ours is a "pluralistic" universe, to use the expression of William James, a universe of free



activities ; and this pluralistic principle applies to the political world as much as to the moral and spiritual world. All nations are *complementary*. No national civilization is complete, and its incompleteness is the necessary result of a natural law ; whether we call that law the law of compensation, or the law of limitation, or the law of division of labour, or of differentiation, or the law of variation ; or whether we call it, in philosophical language, the *principium individuationis*, of individuality and personality ; or whether we attribute it, with the theologian, to the taint of original sin and the imperfection of human nature.

Therefore separate nations can only develop in some directions, and all superiority in one direction must be paid for by inferiority in another direction. A few chosen individuals—a Leonardo da Vinci, a Michael Angelo, a Goethe—may escape from this fatality. Whole nations, millions of individuals, cannot escape from it ; and for that reason we find that some nations are great in the arts of peace and others in the art of war. Some are supreme in commerce, others in philosophy. Some are supreme in theology, others are supreme in science. And for the same reason it is in the greatest nations that we find the most startling shortcomings and deficiencies. England has not produced one single supreme musician or sculptor ; Germany has not produced one single comic

poet ; Scotland has not produced one single mystic thinker ; Spain has not produced one single supreme scientist.

Each nation, then, by virtue of its economic conditions, agricultural or industrial—by virtue of its geographical position, insular or continental, mountainous or level—by virtue of its historic traditions, military or peaceful, Catholic or Protestant—develops a culture of its own, strictly limited, necessarily imperfect. And it is precisely because of those limitations and imperfections, and in order to ensure the diversity and complexity of humanity, that as many nations as possible should be allowed to retain and develop their individuality—their artistic, religious, intellectual, and political personality. To subject Europe to the influence or to the political control of one single Power would be to transform Europe into a Chinese Empire. Even assuming Germany, England, or France to be vastly superior to their neighbours, the supremacy of any one nation would be a catastrophe for civilization. It would damage both the victor and the vanquished, and it would damage the victor more than the vanquished. The vanquished might develop certain qualities under suffering and persecution, the victor would be demoralized by the use of brute force, and his spiritual superiority would disappear by the very abuse he would make of it.

The invariable verdict of universal history is against any monopoly and supremacy—against any form of aggressive Imperialism, political or religious, imposing its rule in the name of a higher civilization. The Roman Empire was destroyed by the very weapons which were used to subject inferior races. The Romans were the victims of the very tyranny which they used against others, and Roman decadence was only arrested because the policy of aggressive Imperialism was reversed; because the spiritual forces of religion, law, education, and commercial intercourse were eventually substituted for temporal supremacy; and because even the barbarians were granted the same political rights as the citizens of Imperial Rome. But even thus the revival of the Roman Empire was only temporary, and a time came when the unity and uniformity of Rome were replaced by the infinite diversity of the Middle Ages.

Even at its best Imperialism is not a human ideal. Civilization is not based on unity, but on diversity and personality, on individuality and originality. And if there is one lesson which history preaches more emphatically than another, it is this: that small nations have in proportion contributed infinitely more than great empires to the spiritual inheritance of our race. Little Greece counts more than Imperial Rome; Weimar counts more than Berlin;

Bruges and Antwerp and Venice count more than the world-wide monarchy of Spain; and the dust of the Campo Santo of Florence or Pisa is more sacred than a hundred thousand square miles of the black soil of the Russian Empire.

No doubt there must be unity in the fundamentals, economic and religious, of human civilization. As the infinitely varied phenomena of life suppose common chemical and physiological processes of combustion, of respiration, and circulation, even so the infinite complexity of social life supposes a common foundation. Full scope must be given to the diversity of human nature and human personality.

In conclusion, then, our political philosophy in general, and our philosophy of patriotism in particular, require complete revision. True patriotism is at the opposite pole from jingoism. The ideal of nationality is not born of pride, but of humility. Nationality is not based on the superiority of any one people, but upon the limitations common to all mortality. Nationality does not justify the supremacy of the strong: it imposes and presupposes a scrupulous regard for the equal rights of the weak, who may be superior in moral culture in proportion as they are inferior in military power.

In the light of the foregoing principles the word "empire" completely changes its meaning. The modern empire has nothing in common

with the empires of the past. The modern empire may be based on identity of language, although the British Empire includes French-speaking and Dutch-speaking peoples, and although the Austro-Hungarian Empire is a very Babel of nations. The modern empire generally assumes community of political ideals. It never implies the rule of a suzerain people over subject races. It is not based on despotism, but on voluntary co-operation. It is essentially a federation of self-governing communities, and is presided over by an older, wiser, and more experienced people, *primus inter pares*, which establishes its rule not on brute force, but on the force of suasion and example and sacrifice.

If those principles are correct—if each nationality must be conceived as one out of many specialized organs of human culture—if the theory of nationality is indeed the application to the science of politics of the principles of compensation, concentration, and division of labour—then it must necessarily follow that nationality can be neither final nor exclusive, neither absolute nor universal.

The national ideal cannot have absolute value. The universal only is absolute; and a national ideal, as such, cannot be universal. If it were, it would cease to be national; it would necessarily appeal to universal humanity.



And national ideas as such cannot be final. Nationality is the means and condition of human advance ; but it is humanity which is the goal. By definition, nationality is deficient and limited. We must submit to and work within those limitations. We must not glorify those limitations into perfections. We must lay upon our souls the humblest tasks of citizenship. We must not claim for this humble service the august significance and the unlimited scope of the service of man. As we stated before, the highest activities of mankind—art, science, and religion—have all ceased to be national. They have all become international.

And the national ideal cannot be exclusive. We must see to it that humanity shall not suffer from exclusive absorption in national aims. And above all, we shall never allow the national ends to be in opposition to the interests of humanity. In order to be good Englishmen and good Germans we must first of all be good Europeans. There exists a solidarity of Europe and America against Asia and Africa. An offensive alliance of one European nation with an Asiatic people against another European nation—as, for instance, the alliance of England and Japan against Russia, or the alliance of Germany with Turkey, or the old diabolical compacts of the English and the French with the Red Indians—is a crime against civilization.



And therefore the popular catch-word, "My country right or wrong," is a perversion of patriotism. Wrong does not cease to be wrong, and injustice and persecution do not cease to be injustice and persecution, simply because, instead of being inflicted upon individuals, they are inflicted upon millions of sufferers. We know that in the world of crime there exist admirable examples of devotion—that even a burglar may be loyal to another burglar unto death; but a citizen owes no loyalty to national crime. I shall not stand by my country if she is morally wrong; and the highest service I can render her is to prove that she is wrong, and to prevent her from persisting in the wrong. If I cannot persuade my country when she pursues an unjust policy, all I can do is to wish and pray that she may not succeed, and that she may be defeated: for a defeat on the battlefield may be a great blessing—the only means to bring a nation back to sanity and to see the evil of her ways; whilst victory obtained in a wrong cause may be the most awful calamity that can befall a nation, and one that may deflect the whole course of national history.

## II.

The political philosophy which we have just outlined has been slowly gaining ground in England. The English ideal of nationality has been broadening out into the ideal of a federation of nations, and the English conception of patriotism has been undergoing a corresponding change. We are not reverting to the vague cosmopolitanism of the eighteenth century, but we are more and more abandoning that spurious and narrow jingoism which can be best described as collective egotism, and which remains the most formidable stumbling-block in the advance of humanity. We still retain the permanent foundation, the eternal human element, the love of the native city. Indeed, our relationship to the city is growing more intimate. We are again looking at the city with the passionate devotion of a citizen of mediæval Florence or Venice. We are gradually realizing that there is ample scope for our citizenship in the little civic group, and that as the family is the nucleus of the city, the city is the nucleus of the commonwealth, and that the health of the larger group is bound up with the prosperity of the smaller.

Our political progress may be largely uncon-

scious. Our political philosophy may still be vague. It may not yet be based on the firm rock of principle. It may still be at the mercy of catch-words and phrases. It may not be a match for powerful vested interests. The English people never were a nation of systematic thinkers: they have left it to Montesquieu, Tocqueville, and Guizot to frame a complete theory of the British Constitution and of representative government. But the English political practice has ever been in advance of political theory. The English people have learned from bitter experience. Their wisdom has been the outcome of their blunders. It has also been the necessary result of national expansion, and expansion on insular and parochial principles. The American commonwealth was lost to England through class rule and selfish statecraft. Wise statesmanship has brought one-third of the habitable globe under British rule; and that rule is to-day the most just, the most moderate, the most tolerant, and the most adaptable, the most progressive, government of the modern world.

The bond which holds together the different parts of the British Empire may be difficult to define. It is always difficult to define the higher and deeper realities of life. One fact is certain: that bond is not material, but moral and spiritual. It does not appeal to the lust of

power and greed. It appeals to the imagination and to the ethical sense of the English people. Economic interests may divide—indeed, must divide—the different parts of the British Empire. As in private life the material interests of different members of one family are necessarily contrary—as the demands of one child on the paternal inheritance must encroach on the portion of the other—so the commercial interests of Canada and Australia may run counter to the interests of the English people. But if they are divided in economic interests, the different parts of the British Empire are united in the communion of the same ideals. In all parts we find the same love of order and liberty, the same respect for personality, the same abhorrence of tyranny, the same participation in the glorious inheritance of English literature. Hostile tariffs may be imposed to keep out British imports ; no tariffs can keep out the ideals of British culture.

And what is true of the political ideal of England is largely true of the French ideal. The Frenchman has always been a humanist. In the words of Macaulay, "the French mind has always been the interpreter between national ideas and those of universal mankind." It is the law of France, the Code Napoleon, which has been adopted to-day by the greater part of the civilized world, and the universality of French culture is expressed to-day in the won-

derful internationality and universality of the French language. As in England, so in France, the human ideal does not exclude and impoverish the national ideal; rather does it include it and enrich it. The French patriot is all the prouder of his country, he is all the more enthusiastic in its service, because he feels that the cause of France is identified with the service of humanity.

### III.

Whilst the national spirit in France and England has been steadily widening, exactly the opposite process has taken place in Prussia.

The German writers of the eighteenth century were pre-eminently teachers of humanism. The very idea of nationality seems to have been alien to them. Literature and philosophy were cosmopolitan. Even Frederick the Great only spoke French, and surrounded himself mainly with French writers. Goethe would not be made into a jingo; he retained his admiration for Napoleon; he refused to follow in the steps of Körner, and to write patriotic verses. Schiller was willing to be made a French citizen by a revolutionary assembly. Kant forgot that he was a Prussian, that he belonged to a military state, and he wrote in favour of eternal peace. Heine spent the greater part of his life in



France, and was permeated with French influences. An ideal cosmopolitanism was the characteristic of the Golden Age of German poetry and German thought.

Something of that cosmopolitanism has survived to-day in German literature. It may be partly accounted for by the dearth of contemporary German art, which again is the penalty of German materialism. But it is largely the result of that intellectual curiosity which survives as one of the most precious legacies of the German past. Ibsen, Tolstoy, Gorki, Maeterlinck, Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, are as popular across the Rhine as in their native countries. No literature can boast of such an admirable body of translations; and in this respect the Germans are only surpassed by the Russians.

But in politics the German people have become narrowly national, intolerant, and aggressive. National selfishness is glorified into a principle. The oppression of other nationalities is extolled as a duty.

I repeat once more that we ought, no doubt, to make every allowance for the fiery outburst of German jingoism. Germany is politically a young nation, and all young nations seem to pass through this malady of political infancy. And the exclusive nationalism of to-day may only be a temporary as well as a necessary reaction against the vague and unpractical cosmopolitanism of



former generations. We must constantly remember that Germany until the middle of the nineteenth century remained a geographical expression. Even as an exile who has long been a homeless wanderer appreciates all the more intensely the blessings of a home, so the German has developed a passionate attachment to his country. But this attachment has become the all-absorbing, jealous, suspicious, and morbid passion of an unbalanced lover. German patriotism has become distorted, perverted, and is to-day an inexhaustible source of political evil. It seems as if to-day it cannot assert itself without assuming a hostile attitude to other nations. Claiming every privilege for his own nationality, the German refuses every political right to other nations. He demands, not equality, but supremacy. He does not base his right on the moral principle of respect for personality. Pedantry is joined to violence, and the university professor becomes the accomplice of the policeman in establishing his claim on the superiority of German culture, on the right of the super-man and the super-race to rule inferior man and inferior races, oblivious of the fact that the claim of German superiority is mainly one of military strength.

The relation of the Teuton to non-Teutonic nations, both in the German Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, is one of the saddest

chapters in contemporary history. Danes in Schleswig-Holstein, Poles in Posen, Frenchmen in Alsace-Lorraine, are denied the most elemental political rights. In Austria, German oppression is worse. Austria-Hungary has been described as the whirlpool of Europe. It might be more fittingly described as the international pandemonium of the Continent. The barren strife of nationalities paralyzes progress and removes every landmark of political morality; and each nation avenges itself when opportunity arises, and the oppressed in turn become the oppressor. Even as the Germans oppress the Tchechs and the Italians, so the Poles oppress the Ruthenians, and the Magyars the Croatians and the Roumanians. Racial politics in Germany and Austria are so chaotic and bewildering that it has become impossible to decide on which side is the right or on which side the wrong. The twentieth-century politics of the two empires, inspired by the evil genius of Prussia, is a convincing proof of the truth of the political philosophy which we have attempted to outline, and will be to future generations an eloquent object-lesson, showing to what extremities of barbarism even a great nation can be driven which ignores the fundamental principles of political morality and follows the will-o'-the-wisp of a perverted patriotism and an inflated imperialism.

## HOW PRUSSIA TREATS HER OWN SUBJECTS.

AT the end of the eighteenth century a State which had played an important part in the history of modern civilization was effaced from the map of Europe and its territory divided between Prussia, Russia, and Austria. The partition of Poland had been a foregone conclusion from the beginning of the century. For generations the three empires had been sowing dissension amongst the Polish noblemen and fanning religious hatred, and had rendered government impossible in the elective monarchy. At last the designs of the three neighbouring empires had been fulfilled. The deed had been done, and, to use the delicate witticism of Frederick the Great, the three monarchs were able to "communicate and partake of the eucharistic body of Poland."

The deed was done, yet the ultimate political purpose of the three despots was frustrated. The Polish nation was killed, but not the Polish

nationality. Ever since the fatal partition Poland has remained an open sore in the body politic of Austria, Russia, and Prussia. The Polish question is behind every great difficulty which arises in Central Europe. On the one hand, it has created a solidarity of reaction and despotism, the three empires being equally interested in preventing the realization of Polish national aspirations. Above and behind the present Triple Alliance of the Austrian, Russian, and Italian people there is another secret triple alliance of the three emperors, held together by a common interest to keep down the Polish nationality. On the other hand, the twenty millions of Poles distributed along that historical frontier line where the three continental empires meet are also held together by the invisible bond of common sufferings, common traditions, and common aspirations.

Every political symptom seems to indicate that in the end the spiritual bond of the people will prove stronger than the tyranny of their oppressors. For a hundred years insurrections, followed by merciless repression, lawlessness, and violence, have been the order of the day. But Germany, Austria, and Russia, if they have killed Poland, have not been able to kill the Polish nationality.

## I.

The destinies of the Polish nation have been very different and yet very similar in the three empires. In Austria the Poles enjoy practical autonomy, and more than once have played a leading part in the Austrian Parliament. But relegated, unfortunately, to a remote corner of the Austrian federation, separated from Prussia and Russia and Poland, mixed up with an enormous population of pauperized Jews, engaged in a religious and racial conflict with the Uniate Ruthenians, the Galician Poles lead a precarious political existence.

In Russia the Poles continue to be oppressed by the bureaucracy of the Czar. They continue to be deprived of the use of their language as well as of their religious and political rights, but the Russian persecution has made the Poles not weaker but stronger. They have ceased to rise in open rebellion, but they oppose against their oppressors that passive resistance and determination which sooner or later must conquer. To-day Russian Poland is perhaps the richest part of the Russian Empire, and when the day of freedom finally comes for the empire of the Czars, it is impossible to conceive that Polish autonomy can be withheld any longer.

In Prussia the persecution of the Poles has



been no less persistent. It has not assumed the violent forms which it takes in Russia ; it has not led to wholesale massacres and bloody insurrections ; it has borrowed the forms of the law ; it has called in the assistance of the Code. But it has been even more systematical, more methodical, more hypocritical, and equally odious, and it may be asserted that to-day the Prussian Government is even more hated by the Poles than the Russian Government. And certainly persecution has been as disastrous a failure in Prussia as it has been in Austria and Russia. So far from suppressing or repressing the Polish nationality, so far from depressing its vitality, the Prussian persecution has only stimulated it.

The rapid increase of the Polish population has given alarm to the Prussian Government. Provinces which for generations had been German now become Polonized. Even Silesia sends several Polish members to the Reichstag. And the increase of the Polish population extends to the towns as well as to the country. The strict regulations of the Roman Catholic Church on mixed marriages still further favour the expansion of the Polish nationality. Wherever a Catholic Pole marries a German Protestant the second generation becomes Polish and Catholic.

This sudden Polonization has been a severe blow to Prussian pride and a source of grave



anxiety to Prussian patriotism. Were the Prussians going to be driven back in the East? Were the frontier provinces, the marches of the empire; was Silesia, the hard-won prize of Frederick the Great; was the very cradle of the Prussian monarchy to come into the possession of an alien and hostile race? Was the tragedy of Bohemia, which once was German and now has become Tchech, going to be repeated once more? And when the great day of reckoning comes between the Slav and the Teuton, when the Pole is reconciled with his Russian brother and will combine against the common foe, will Prussian Poland be allowed to fall into the hands of Prussia's hereditary enemies?

For the Prussian rulers merely to propose such a question was already to solve it. The Polish nation was a danger to the Vaterland, therefore it must be crushed. The Prussians have always had an almost morbid sense of national patriotism, but they have always had little regard for the patriotism of others.

In 1886 Bismarck decided to interfere with the natural law of increase, and to check the Polish infiltration. The problem was: What form ought the interference to take? How could the advance of the Polish population be arrested most efficiently and most rapidly? The Turkish method of Armenian massacre was not to

be thought of. Wholesale transportation was equally out of the question. To restrict the Poles, like the Jews in Russia, within a certain area, within "the pale," was impracticable. To disperse the Poles all over the empire would only be to spread the disease, for owing to their gregarious habits the Poles would continue to form little islands of Slavonia. The inventive genius of despotism, which in Bismarck was never at fault, finally suggested to him a vast scheme of Government colonization, which was soon to be followed by compulsory expropriation. The Prussian Government was to acquire extensive estates, and German settlers, mostly Protestant, were to be established on them. And if sufficient land could not be acquired by free purchase the Polish landowner and the Polish peasant would be compulsorily expropriated. In 1886 the famous colonizing commission, the "Ansiedelungs Commission," was appointed.

As the Poles were gradually to be dispossessed of their land, so they were to be deprived of their language. The use of Polish was prohibited in public meetings. The national language was soon ousted from the schools, and children were forbidden to pray to God in their mother tongue.

Those methods might well be considered objectionable from a moral point of view, and

injurious to the fair fame of German civilization. They might also be considered perilous from a political point of view. At a time when Prussia was honeycombed with Socialism, it was a dangerous precedent to violate the rights of private property and to resort to wholesale expropriation. At a time when the religious passions roused by the Kulturkampf had gradually subsided, it might be dangerous to raise once more the Catholic question which in Poland was bound up with the linguistic and racial question. And finally, the unjust persecution of the Prussian Poles might rouse the four millions of Austrian Poles, whose weighty political influence might be used against Germany in the Triple Alliance.

But if the methods used by Bismarck were doubtful and dangerous they were deemed necessary. Bismarck, the great enemy of the Jesuits, never hesitated to adopt the principle which is supposed to be the lodestar of the Jesuit order: the end justifies the means. The end was sacred. The end was the salvation of Prussia; it safeguarded the future of the German race, which was imperilled by the Polish invasion.

The fact that the colonization scheme was initiated by Bismarck prejudiced half of the educated Prussians in its favour. Bismarck had decreed a policy, therefore it must be good. At the end of his life Bismarck had become to his

countrymen not only a great statesman, but the incarnate genius of statesmanship. In the Walhalla of national heroes he had become a demi-god. The worship of Bismarck was a religion even to Liberal politicians.

It is difficult at the present day to understand how any critical student of German politics could have believed for one moment in the infallibility of Bismarck's policy. Few statesmen have made more grievous mistakes. It is true that he achieved the one great object of his life, the unification of Germany ; but it has become increasingly doubtful whether that object would not have been attained without Bismarck—if more slowly, all the more securely and permanently. One fact is certain : all the political schemes of Bismarck in the latter part of his life have been uniform failures. He wanted an understanding with Russia, yet he failed to prevent the Franco-Russian Alliance. He failed to foresee and to direct the colonial aspirations of his countrymen. He missed opportunities for expansion which were never to recur. He initiated the *Kulturkampf*, and was beaten by little Windhorst. He decreed the *Sozialisten Gesetz*, and his anti-Socialist laws only stimulated the growth of the Socialist Democratic Party. He made the German Empire, yet he was ignominiously dismissed by the German emperor ; and he spent the last years of his life in carry-

ing on a vindictive campaign, which undermined the prestige of the empire which he had built up.

But the last legacy of Bismarck was also the most fatal. No other part of the Bismarckian policy shows more glaringly the fatal weakness of his methods. The anti-Polish legislation has operated for a quarter of a century. A civil war has raged, and has widened the gulf between the two races. Lawsuits without number have taught the people to defy the law. Little children have been taught to abhor the language of their oppressors. The Polish school strike of 1907 is an unexampled phenomenon in modern history, and it lasted over a year. The Colonization Commission has spent over five hundred million marks. The price of the land has doubled. The landowner has been enriched. The peasant and the taxbearer have been made poorer. But although poorer, the Polish peasant has retained the land of his father, and the area occupied by the Poles is actually larger than it was. And although poorer the Pole has become politically stronger. The Polish peasant has been taught virtues which hitherto were foreign to his nature. He has been educated by his oppressors into self-sacrifice and thrift, organization and discipline. The two races stand facing each other in irreconcilable opposition. A few concrete facts will illustrate better than any general statements the condition of affairs which at the



beginning of the twentieth century prevailed in Prussian Poland.

The following anecdote illustrates the close connection which exists in Prussia between the land question and political loyalty. It shows that, under the régime which to-day rules in Prussia, the owner of a large estate is as completely the master of the votes of his tenants as was the English landowner in the Golden Age of the "rotten boroughs":—

The owner of a vast estate, in whose boundaries was included one entire electoral district, assembled his tenants and dependants and promised them a banquet in the event of all the votes without a single exception being favourable to the Conservative candidate. The banquet did not take place because, at the declaration of the polls, there was found that one vote, one single vote, had been given in favour of the Liberals. That vote had been given by the shrewd landowner himself in order to save the cost of the banquet!

In 1908 the following scene was enacted before a Prussian law court:—

"Accused Biedermann, how much does your patrimony amount to?"

"I do not know exactly."

"But approximately?"

"I am the most highly-assessed Polish taxpayer, and I pay into the Imperial German



Treasury more than thirty thousand marks a year."

"You are a born German, as your name suggests, and late in life you have learned Polish?"

"That is not true. My grandfather took part in the great Polish revolution."

"Is it true that you buy the land of German landowners in order to transfer it to men of your own race?"

"I do not only buy German land, I also acquire and resell Polish property."

"Is it true that you employ the services of German middlemen, whom you bribe to acquire German property?"

"Exactly so. I do my best to imitate the German Government Colonization Commission, which hires Polish middlemen to expropriate my fellow-citizens."

"You then confess that you take advantage of the good faith of the Germans?"

"I would like to have all the millions which would be required to acquire the estates which are offered to me every day."

"By what insidious means do you succeed in bribing your German agents, and making them a gang of traitors to their country?"

"I have never sought them out. They come and ask me to employ them, and I accept them or refuse them according to the needs of the

moment. The other day a major in the army presented himself to me, and offered to assist me in deceiving the Germans in the interest of the Polish nationality. By the way, that major was not a civilian ! ”

“Is it true that you never resell an estate which you have acquired unless you are perfectly sure that it remains in Polish hands ? ”

“Exactly so, Mr. President. That is my duty as a Pole.” \*

## II.

In this great Polish controversy, which continues to rage in the German Empire, it is important that we should closely and impartially examine the arguments adduced on both sides.

An acute and sympathetic French observer, M. Huret, in the fourth volume of his great work on Germany, considers the question as hopelessly complicated and perplexing. If he means to say that the question has roused much bitterness and passion, that it is almost impossible to obtain reliable facts and statistics, then M. Huret is no doubt right. But if he means to suggest that the arguments for and against the Prussian policy are so evenly balanced that it is impossible to say which side is right, then we contend that M. Huret's statement cannot be

\* See the Italian work, Borgese's, “Nuova Germania.”

accepted. We submit that the Polish question, so far from being complicated, is tragically simple. It is not necessary to be a statesman to see the main issue, and it was not necessary to be a statesman to foresee the event. The most ignorant citizen versed in the alphabet of political science must clearly see why the Polish experiment failed, and can draw the political and moral lessons implied in the failure.

The Prussian argument has already been outlined, and can be summed up in a few clauses. The Poles have an instinctive hatred for the Prussians, and cannot be assimilated by any conciliatory methods. As they increase much more rapidly than the Prussians, as, indeed, to use the expression of Prince von Bülow, they breed like rabbits, some means must be used to check the Polish advance. It is essential to the integrity and preservation of the empire that the eastern and south-eastern frontiers shall not fall into the hands of a disaffected race. In case of a war with Russia the disaffection of the Poles might determine the issue of the campaign. In the case of a revolution in Russia there might be a rebellion in Prussian Poland, the Prussian Poles might be induced to join their Russian brethren and attempt the reconstruction of the old Polish kingdom.

The scheme of the Colonization Commission

is claimed to be the only possible one that can ward off a great national danger. It is necessary for Prussia. It is also beneficial to the Poles. For any means, however unpleasant at first sight, which can hasten the assimilation of the two races, is to be commended in the interest of the Poles themselves. They are an inferior race. They are not a *Kulturvolk*. It is a blessing to them to be compelled to adopt the higher culture of Germany. They have already prospered exceedingly under the firm but just rule of Prussia. They speak a dialect which isolates them from the civilization of the world, and it is a blessing to them to be compelled to speak the language of Goethe! As they are children, and ungrateful children, they must be treated like children; and no methods of mere persuasion, no methods short of actual compulsion, will achieve the desirable consummation.

The argument which justifies the oppression of the Poles in the name of a higher civilization is the old argument which in all ages and in all countries has been used to justify the appeal to brute force. In the name of a higher civilization the English in former days oppressed the Irish. In the name of a higher civilization the Russians to-day persecute the Jews and the Finns. In the name of a higher civilization the Magyars oppress the Croatians and the Roumanians.

To any patriot the culture of his own country must needs be superior to that of any other. Above all, to a German there could only be one higher culture. Has not the emperor proclaimed that he is "the salt of the earth"?—*"Wir sind das Salz der Erde."*

Through the whole Polish controversy runs one *Leitmotiv*—the supreme contempt of the Prussian ruler for the Polish subject. And so persistently have the Poles been maligned, so entirely are we depending even for the bare facts of Polish history on the authority of their oppressors, that it is difficult to give an impartial statement of the Polish side of the case. But, if we try to rid ourselves of preconceptions, it is obvious that the Poles have been more sinned against than sinning. We do not believe in any inherent incapacity of the Poles to govern themselves. The Polish nation never had a chance. Poland was hemmed in on three sides by three mighty Powers. The anarchy of Poland has been the unavoidable consequence of its geographical position and of historical fatalities. Any strong Polish government, any drastic reform of the *Liberum Veto* Constitution, was impossible, because neighbouring kingdoms were interested in maintaining Polish misgovernment, and in fishing in its troubled waters. Religious peace was impossible, because neighbouring kingdoms were doing their utmost to sow religious dissension.



And if the Polish nation made grievous mistakes, no nation has paid more dearly for them, or has retrieved them more heroically. No nation has been greater in misfortune. If the Poles do **not** deserve to be called a *Kultur-volk*, we confess we do not know what are the criteria of a cultured people. Surely a nation which has produced great men in all branches of human activity, which has produced a Kopernic, a Sobieski, a Kosciusko, a Mickiewicz, and a Chopin, is not a nation of mere barbarians. A nation which for a hundred and fifty years has asserted itself against overwhelming odds has proved its right to live. Although Prussian journalists are apt to indulge in an unworthy pun, to associate the "Slav" and the "slave," a nation which by heroic rebellion or passive resistance has driven back the three most mighty military empires of Central Europe is not a nation of slaves, but a race of free men. The Prussian may have conscientious scruples against rebellion, he may passively submit to the dictation of the Junkers, and boast of his love of order and authority; but there are impartial observers who would not be prepared to admit that the submissiveness of the Prussian is necessarily a criterion of a higher civilization. Rather would they be inclined to admit that the Pole who rebels against oppression and injustice stands, at least politically,



on a higher level than the Prussian who accepts them.

It is therefore impossible to agree with the argument of the claims of a higher civilization. Nor is it possible to agree with the argument drawn from the instinctive hostility of the Pole. If the Pole enjoyed the benefits of a just and free government, the probability is that he would not hate his rulers. We are told that the Poles deserve to be persecuted because they are disaffected. Rather would we be prepared to argue that they are disaffected because they are persecuted, and that they will become every day more hostile as the persecution becomes more persistent and more brutal.

But even assuming the Prussian culture to be superior, even assuming the Poles to be animated with an instinctive hatred for their oppressors, the whole argument would still be irrelevant. The question is not whether the Pole hates the Prussian nor why he hates him, the question is not whether the oppressor is superior to the oppressed, the question is not whether the increase of the Polish population imperils the safety of the Prussian State, the ultimate question is whether the policy of oppression has been successful or can be successful. Surely it ought not to be necessary to remind Prussian publicists who pride themselves on being *Realpolitiker*—practical politicians—that

a policy can only be judged by its results. Let pedantic doctrinaires and university professors argue *ad infinitum* on the justice or injustice of the case, on the merits of the Prussians and the demerits of the Poles, on the justification of the means or the sacredness of the end, the ultimate question is: Even assuming both the means and the end to be justified, are those means conducive to the end in view?

Alas! the facts answer with crushing eloquence. The persecution has defeated its purpose. It has failed, and was bound to fail. The Prussian Government have aimed at taking away their land and their language from a people passionately attached to both. They have misunderstood the temper of the subject race. They have shown a total lack of sympathy and imagination. They have ignored moral forces. They have appealed to sordid interest. They have ignored sentiment and instinct. A liberal policy would probably, in course of time, have won over the Poles. At any rate they would have learned that a knowledge of German is more important than a knowledge of Polish, just as the Boers have been taught that English is more important than Dutch. By prohibiting the Polish language they have made a love of the native language a matter of patriotic duty. By trying to deprive the Polish peasant of the land

they have only made the native land dearer to him.

The Englishman who studies the Polish question involuntarily thinks of Ireland. In both cases we meet with the same opposition of race and of religion. In both cases we find the same arguments used against a just and liberal policy. The Irishman had to be oppressed because the safety of Great Britain demanded it, because the Saxon was superior to the Celt, because the Catholic was inferior to the Protestant. In both cases the same errors have been visited with the same punishment. But in comparing the two situations the English observer must remember that the parallel exists, not between the Prussian methods of to-day and the English methods of to-day, but between the Prussian methods of to-day and the English methods of the eighteenth century. So far are English and Prussian methods to-day from being in the least similar, that nothing illustrates more eloquently than Ireland and Poland the difference of English and Prussian politics, and the enormous advance made by the English people in the science of government.

For the methods used by the English in Ireland are to-day exactly the opposite of those used by Prussia in Poland. The English Government also have established "a Colonization Commission." But instead of using public

money to deprive the Irish peasantry of their land, as the Prussians have done, the English Government have made an enormous sacrifice to expropriate the English landlord and to transfer the soil to the Irish people. And the success which has attended the agrarian Irish policy initiated by Gladstone, and carried out by the Conservative Government, is the best proof of its wisdom, even as the failure which has attended the policy of the Prussian bureaucrats is the best proof of its folly.

### III.

Although apparently of purely local and technical interest, the Polish question deserves special and careful study, both for its far-reaching practical importance and for its profound philosophical interest.

In practical politics the problem remains for German statesmen the insoluble riddle of the Sphinx, and although the Polish opposition only represents a small fraction of the Reichstag, yet those twenty members constitute a material addition to an already predominant Centre Party, and contribute to the maintenance of its supremacy. In the event of a future war with Russia, or in the more probable and more immediate contingency of a change of political

methods in the empire of the Czars, the Polish difficulty would become the vital question in the governance of the German Empire. If the concession of autonomy to Russian Poland, which was a favourite scheme of Alexander the First, were one day to be granted—and it must be granted if constitutional government is ever to become a reality—then the pressure for Home Rule in the Eastern Marshes would become irresistible, the union or the federation between Prussian Poland and Russian Poland would be achieved, and the old kingdom of Poland would be reconstituted. There lies the secret of the intimate solidarity and freemasonry between the despotism of Berlin and the despotism of St. Petersburg. There is the reason why William stood loyally by Nicholas the Second in his hour of trial. There also is one of the reasons why the Russian struggle for political freedom failed in 1905. Any volcanic outburst in the empire of the Romanovs would shake the throne of the Hohenzollern.

But important as the Polish question is in the internal and foreign policy of the German Empire, to the foreign student it is mainly interesting because of the vivid light it throws on the methods of Prussian government. Better than any other concrete illustration, it reveals the political conceptions of the German people, it reveals the fundamental differences



between the English ideals and the German ideals of empire. It reveals the Prussian belief in force and in authority, the superstition of the State, the disbelief in human freedom, the disregard of the rights of other nationalities.

And better than any other study the Polish policy explains the failure of Germany as a colonizing Power. For colonization means sympathy and imagination, elasticity and the capacity of adaptation, and above all the capacity of assimilating alien elements. The German absolutely lacks that capacity. Whilst he is easily assimilated, whether he emigrates to France or to the United States, whilst he constitutes splendid ethnical material, he is incapable of assimilating himself. He has not succeeded in absorbing either the Dane or the Pole or the Alsatian. A patriotic historian, Professor Lamprecht, admits this fatal weakness, but he admits it only for the Northern German, and he considers that it has been and will be more and more the historic mission of the Austrian German to assimilate alien races and gain them over to the *Deutschtum*. Whoever has taken the trouble to study the conflict of nationalities in the Austrian Empire, which is called the "whirlpool of Europe," will refuse to admit the theory of Professor Lamprecht. No more than the North German has the Austrian German assimilated the Magyar, or the Tchech, or

the Pole, or the Ruthenian, or the Italian, or the Roumanian, or the Croatian. The struggle of nationalities is as bitter and as hopeless in the empire of the Habsburg as in the empire of the Hohenzollern.

This conclusion, if justified by the facts, is of decisive importance for the future of Europe. If the Germans do not possess the capacity of colonizing—that is to say, of assimilating other races—the sooner they give up their Imperial ambitions the better for them. For these ambitions can only land in disastrous failure. The Germans have proved that they are a great people. But they have also proved that they are not an Imperial people. The Pan-German ideal is a delusion. The present German Empire has already reached its utmost capacity of expansion. The annexation of any new nationality would be like the inoculation of a poison into the German body politic. The conflicting ideals of Poles and Danes, Alsacians and Hanoverians, of Protestant and Catholic, of North and South, already renders it increasingly difficult to carry on the business of government, and the unity of the empire can only be maintained artificially by autocracy and bureaucracy. Any further annexation, any further move in the direction of Pan-Germanism would bring about the disintegration and absorption of the German Empire.

## THE FIRST GERMAN GRIEVANCE.

*Has England taken Germany's place in the Sun?*

### I.

It is to-day a commonplace universally accepted in Germany that England has deliberately checked German expansion, or, to use a metaphor which has become of daily use in the popular Press, that "she has taken Germany's place in the sun."

This accusation obviously cannot apply to the commercial expansion of Germany. So far from being checked by England, German commercial expansion has been immensely stimulated by the liberal policy pursued by England. *English Free Trade has been one of the most important contributory causes of German prosperity.* England has been Germany's best colony; and not only has England thrown open her own markets to a rival whose competition in early days was not always fair and legitimate, but she has enabled Germany to trade on equal terms with practically every part of the British Empire.

This indebtedness of Germany to English Free Trade is admitted, however reluctantly, by all German economists who have made a study of the subject. Professor von Schulze-Gaevernitz concedes that if England had repudiated Free Trade: if she had adopted Protection, or, rather, Fair Trade: if Mr. Chamberlain's policy, or even Mr. Balfour's policy, had triumphed, German trade would have received a formidable set-back. In the face of this admission by leading German economists, it is all the more strange how entirely the facts are distorted by the average German journalist; it is all the more strange that to-day the man in the street, forgetting what English Free Trade has done for the Vaterland, still considers England as the implacable enemy of German commercial and industrial development.

If England has not checked German commercial expansion, but, on the contrary, has furthered it, can it be asserted that she has arrested her colonial expansion? In Germany it is universally assumed that she has, and the assumption is now becoming part of the political creed of the average Teuton. We are told that every other great nation but Germany has been allowed to build up a colonial empire. Vanquished France has been magnanimously allowed by the victor to acquire most of her

vast colonies since 1870. Russia has expanded in the Near East and in the Far East, and, although she has met with formidable disasters, she continues steadily to advance. In recent years England, although she declared herself long ago to be satiated and saturated, has annexed the South African Republics. Even so the United States have picked a quarrel with Spain in true Anglo-Saxon fashion, they have annexed Cuba, the Philippines, and Panama, and they are now coveting the mastery of the Pacific. Germany alone has been left with only a few outlying regions of the planet neglected by the other empires. She has had to be content with "light African soil" and with tropical marshes. And this iniquitous treatment of Germany is due, it is contended, mainly to the persistent hostility with which England has opposed the most legitimate colonial aspirations of the German people.

Generally there is a large element of truth in any widely spread popular preconception, but in the present case there is not one atom of reason in the German grievance. As we pointed out in the Preface of this book, England cannot have checked the colonial aspirations of Germany, for the simple reason that until quite recently those German aspirations did not exist. *So little did colonial expansion bulk in the policy of the country that it was only in the beginning of the*



*twentieth century that an independent German colonial office was instituted.* Few outsiders realize that the first colonial secretary, Dr. Dernburg, was only appointed five years ago!

It is true that for the last twenty years Germany has tried to make up with feverish haste for the centuries she has lost, and that since she has suddenly awakened to the possibilities of a colonial empire she has been confronted everywhere with the conflicting claims of England. But that is not because England is hostile to German expansion, but simply because England was already everywhere in possession, because England had had more luck, and probably also because England had shown more energy, more enterprise. Whilst German expansion begins with the beginning of the twentieth century, English expansion began at the end of the sixteenth—an advance of more than three hundred and fifty years. Surely it is unfair to the English people to accuse them of hostility to the German people merely because in the sixteenth century Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Drake, and the immortal mariners whose exploits we read of in Hakluyt's "Voyages" had the luck or the pluck to lay the foundation of Greater Britain, the "*Oceana*" of future ages.

There is a tide in the affairs of nations as there is in the affairs of individuals. Some

nations come too early in the field. Thus Portugal and Spain conquered their colonies in an age of political fanaticism and economic ignorance, and they lost their empire by their lust and their greed, their intolerance and their cruelty.

Some nations, again, like England, have appeared in the nick of time. They have been favoured by historical circumstances as well as by their geographical position. England was able to learn from the failures of others. Her first colonizers were free men accustomed to self-government. She was allowed definitely to consolidate her empire whilst scientific discoveries were transforming the world. She was left almost alone in the field whilst a political revolution diverted and absorbed for a quarter of a century the other Powers of Europe.

And, again, there are nations who have come too late. Of this fact there is no more striking instance than the tardy appearance of the German Empire. Although a far-sighted German pioneer, like Frederick List, who had served his political apprenticeship in the United States, clearly pointed the way seventy-five years ago, Germany was unable to enter in the race for empire because she was not ready.

What makes the case of Germany more tragic is that the German people cannot be allowed

to blame destiny alone or untoward circumstances. They must also blame themselves, and that is what few Germans to-day are prepared to admit. Even after 1870 Germany might still have built up a magnificent empire, but she let the opportunity slip, and the opportunity will never recur again. Even after 1870 Germany might have carved for herself extensive possessions in Africa and Asia. She was the paramount Power in European politics, and she might easily have achieved what France, what even little Belgium, were enabled to achieve. The Conference of Berlin which in 1884 partitioned Africa might have registered a German colonial triumph, as the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 registered her political triumph. Germany surrendered the Congo Free State without foreseeing its future. She surrendered Indo-China and Madagascar to France. In the 'eighties German emigrants were still leaving the Vaterland in hundreds of thousands. If at that time the tide of German emigration had been systematically directed towards South Africa, the South African Commonwealth to-day would have been German. It is a fact that at the end of the nineteenth century the ambitions of the German Empire definitely turned to the Dutch Republics, and the late German Ambassador in London, Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, declared, as

German Foreign Secretary, that the independence of the Transvaal was a German interest.

How, then, shall we account for this extraordinary blindness to the possibilities of the future in so ambitious and intelligent a race as the German people? How shall we explain the contrast between their splendid commercial success and their colonial failures?

The reasons are manifold, and we would suggest the following as specially worthy of consideration. It will be found that none of these reasons for German failure in colonization have anything to do with English hostility.

In the first place, German Imperialists ought to lay the responsibility upon German statesmen, and especially upon their favourite hero, Bismarck. The more we critically examine Bismarck's achievements, the more we realize that he was a statesman of the old school, the school of despotism, the school which believed in brute force and not in the display of the free individual energies of man. Bismarck was a realist and a materialist. He had much less imagination than he is often credited with. He did not indulge, like Talleyrand, in visions of a distant future, in dreams of a German Oceana. To him sufficient for the day were the struggles thereof. So little did he believe in any colonial policy that he deliberately induced France once more to embark in the race for empire. He

tempted her to go to Tunis, to Morocco, to the Far East. If a considerable part of the French Empire in Africa and Asia has not become German, the Germans ought not to blame the greed of the French people, but rather the short-sightedness of the great Chancellor. Bismarck lost the reality for the shadow. Bismarck's ambition was, to control the Continent, to establish a Napoleonic Empire in Europe, with the result that to-day all the non-German Powers of the West are leagued against the Vaterland.

There is a second political reason for the colonial failure of Germany. At the critical time when England, France, and Russia were building up and consolidating their colonial empires, Bismarck and the German people were still absorbed by religious struggles and by civil dissensions, and were paying the penalty of a blundering home policy. The Iron Chancellor was hurling his *Jesuiten Gesetz* against the Ultramontanes, and his *Sozialisten Gesetz* against the Labour Party. Mighty moral and economic forces were being set free, and Bismarck, who did not believe in moral forces, fondly imagined that the old brutal methods would be sufficient to hold them in check. He fondly imagined that he would triumph over Catholicism and Socialism by throwing into prison a few hundred old monks and a few thousand miserable



working men. For ten years after the Franco-German War, Bismarck was engaged in a deadly conflict with the "black international" of the priests, and the "red international" of Social Democracy. At this distance of time we can see that those conflicts were a lamentable waste of national energy, and that if Bismarck had pursued a systematic colonial policy, *in grossem Stil*, for instance in South Africa, he might on the one hand have relieved the political pressure of the Vaterland; and on the other hand he might have secured the co-operation of the Roman Catholic Church, and of their wonderful missionary organization.

There can be no doubt, therefore, that Bismarck was partly accountable. He let great opportunities pass by unheeded. But again we cannot impute the blame to one statesman, however powerful, no more than we can make blind fate responsible, and this brings us to a third reason accounting for Germany's failure. The final responsibility must be traced to the political and moral shortcomings of the German people themselves. After all, successful colonization, as distinguished from the old predatory Imperialism, is the fruit of political freedom, of individual initiative, of a spirit of adventure and enterprise, and until recently the German people were lacking in every one of those qualities.

We often hear it said that England has both

colonies and colonists, that France has colonies but no colonists, and that Germany has colonists but no colonies. The general statement that Germany is a country rich in colonists is only partially true. Germany is not really a nation of colonists in the exact sense of the word, *for a colonist is a man who settles in a new land, and a man who settles in a new land must be a pioneer and an adventurer.* Now the German does not like to settle in a new land ; he is so accustomed to passive obedience that he does not succeed in those new countries where initiative is the first quality required. He generally prefers to go to old settled countries, like the United States, or Brazil, which have already an organized government. The typical German is no Robinson Crusoe. He is even less of a pioneer than the Frenchman. Although France in popular estimation is supposed not to produce human material for colonies, as a matter of fact she has produced, even in our generation, a far more abundant crop than Germany of explorers and adventurers.

In this connection it would be interesting to compare what has been done by Germany and what has been done by France and England in the exploration of our planet. I have no doubt that a searching and impartial investigation would prove that in the long and glorious roll of Polar, African, and Asiatic explorers, Germany

only occupies a secondary place. Neither Stanley nor Livingstone, Nansen nor Shackleton, Bonvalot nor Przejalski, Lamy nor Marchand belong to the Vaterland.

We would suggest a fourth reason, mainly economic, of German failure, and it is so obvious that we need not dwell upon it. Modern colonization, with its vast schemes, its building of railways, demands very considerable risk, and an abundant supply of capital. Unfortunately, even after the Franco-German War, and notwithstanding the French millions, Germany was still comparatively poor, and wanted all her available capital to develop her industries at home. Although it is universally assumed that the war enriched the Germans, as a matter of fact, three years after the *annus mirabilis* the new empire found itself on the verge of national bankruptcy. And it is not to be wondered at, that in those early days of her industrial expansion Germany should not have risked her scanty resources in any of the great ventures which were opening new continents to Western civilization.

And last but not least, we would suggest as a fifth reason that colonization demands considerable political experience, and demands especially that kind of experience which is acquired by a long historical tradition, and by the practice of free institutions. It is this political experience

in which Germany was and still is to-day signally deficient. And it is this experience which has largely made the success of English colonization. That experience has been acquired by England at the cost of persistent and disastrous failures. It was because England treated the American colonies harshly and unjustly that she lost the United States. But in the course of generations England learnt her lessons, and it is because she did learn from her own bitter experience the wisdom of a generous and liberal policy that she saved French Canada in the nineteenth century, and that in our own days she saved Dutch South Africa.

## II.

It is in the light of the foregoing considerations that we must form our judgment on the German colonial grievance. After what has been said, we need look for no extraneous reasons to account for the breakdown of German colonization, and we shall cease to wonder if a nation, otherwise so eminently successful in developing her trade and industry, should have done so little in "bearing the white man's burden."

It is not necessary to make more than a passing reference to German enterprise in the

Cameroons, in South-West and in East Africa, because that enterprise has been mainly a fiasco. The "dark continent" has verily been to the Germans an ill-fated continent. The ruinous wars with the Herreros, the disclosures in the Reichstag on East African mismanagement, the failure and prosecution of two famous explorers, tried before the German High Court for alleged atrocities, are only a few of the many unpleasant episodes in the history of the African dependencies. And it can hardly be said that the recent concessions obtained in the French Congo are an adequate compensation for the vanished dream of a Greater Germany under the Southern Cross.

Other German schemes of colonial expansion have not been more successful. Germany had set her hopes on a new empire in China. It was that prospect which induced her to join with Russia in preventing the Japanese from getting a footing on the Chinese continent after the Chino-Japanese War, and which also induced her to defend the integrity of China. And having guarded against Japan the integrity of China, Germany initiated the partition and established herself at Kiao-Tcheou in the Shantung. This fateful step led to all the later complications and catastrophes. It led to the occupation of Wei-hai-wei by England, and of Port Arthur by Russia. It led directly



to the Boxer rising against the foreign invader. It led indirectly to the Russian expansion in Manchuria, and to the Russo-Japanese War.

Many significant incidents indicated at the time of the Boxer rising the importance which Germany attributed to her Chinese schemes. German publicists proclaimed that the future of Germany lay in China. The German Emperor preached a national crusade denouncing the Yellow Peril, presumably to conciliate the Chinese people. The German Government took the lead in repressing the rebellion. The Emperor dispatched his own brother as well as his favourite soldier, Marschall von Waldersee. It was Waldersee who assumed the Command-in-Chief of the European contingents. And also presumably in order to conciliate his future Chinese subjects, the Kaiser gave solemn instructions that the Chinese rebels were to be given no quarter. German hopes ran high during those eventful months, and the German Government seemed determined to make the most of the assassination of its ambassador. The breaking up of China seemed imminent. The unexpected happened. Japan forestalled both Russia and Germany, and the triumph of the Japanese armies put an end to German ambitions. And since Moukden and Tsusima, another formidable competitor has arisen in the Pacific, more favourably situated,

and with greater chances of success. Whether the United States will eventually control the Western Pacific shores, and divide China into spheres of influence, or whether the prize will fall to Russia or Japan is uncertain. But one fact is certain: Shantung will never become the nucleus of a German dependency.

Together with China, South America at the end of the nineteenth century attracted German ambitions, and, so far, Southern Brazil has been the most successful field for German colonization. The degenerate, half-caste Brazilian is not a match for the energetic Teuton, and the country is immensely wealthy, and offers infinite possibilities. Although the semi-tropical climate does not seem favourable to a Northern race, several hundreds of thousands of German colonists have settled in the Southern provinces, and when one considers that the French-Canadians were only fifty thousand in the eighteenth century, and are now two millions, a patriotic German may reasonably hope that the present settlement might eventually have grown into a vigorous Teutonic offshoot.

But here again the fatal word "too late" is written on the wall. The Monroe doctrine opposes an insuperable obstacle to German expansion. The German Government may have thought at one moment of challenging the doctrine, and the significant fact that already

in 1902 Germany put in a claim for a harbour on the west coast of Morocco (Mogador, or Agadir) may have been connected with ulterior designs on South America. But in the meantime Admiral Mahan and Roosevelt had converted the Yankee to a policy of aggressive Imperialism, and to-day, with the imminent opening of the Panama Canal, the risks have become too great for any European Power to interfere with the United States and South America. A war with the American Commonwealth would be too heavy a price to pay for a German colony in Brazil, for even if successful it could not be ultimately retained against both North and South Americans. And therefore Germany must be resigned to leave the United States in undisputed control of the American continent.

### III.

From whatever point of view we examine the subject, we find that the accusation that England has checked German colonial expansion is totally unfounded. There may have been diplomatic complications, but considering the enormous surface of possible friction, and considering that England was everywhere in possession, the astonishing fact is, that the differences should not have been more numerous

or more serious. And certainly there has been no ill-will on the part of England, nor any disposition to hinder the settlement of outstanding difficulties, whether in the case of Heligoland, in East Africa, in West Africa, or in Samoa. And the causes which we have analyzed at the beginning of this chapter are amply sufficient to account for the comparative failure of German ambitions, without making it necessary to assume any Machiavelian plotting of English diplomacy. The sooner the German people realize those simple facts the better it will be for the promotion of a more cordial understanding with her English rivals. The sooner they realize their shortcomings, and the sooner they "put their house in order," the better will be the prospects of her present colonial possessions.

## THE BAGHDAD RAILWAY AND GERMAN EXPANSION IN THE NEAR EAST.\*

### I.

MOST readers who have followed us in our brief examination of the various attempts of German colonization in South America, in South Africa, and in China, and who compare the paucity of the results with the greatness of the effort, and especially with the magnitude of the aspirations, will no doubt have joined us in our conclusion, shared by the Germans

\* The present chapter is largely based on personal investigations pursued during two recent journeys in the Near East and in the Balkan States. A vast literature has sprung up on the Baghdad Railway, testifying to the large place it holds in the preoccupations of European diplomacy. I would specially draw attention to the works of Valentine Chirol, "The Middle East;" Dr. Rohrbach, "Die Bagdad Bahn;" Rudolf Martin, *ibid.*; the works of Charles Loiseau, "L'Equilibre adriatique;" René Henry, "La Question d'Orient;" "Des Monts de Bohême au Golfe Persique;" and last, but not least, to the remarkable volumes of André Chéradame, who, although too much of an alarmist, has done more than any man living to open the eyes of European opinion to the dangers of German policy. (See also articles by Dr. Dillon in the *Contemporary*, and by Mr. Garvin in the *Fortnightly*.)



themselves, that, on the whole, German colonization has been a failure. But that historical generalization demands a very important qualification. For in passing in review the history of German colonial enterprise, I have purposely left out one vast region where, if not German colonization, at least German expansion has been a conspicuous success. Indeed the achievements of Germany in that region have been so momentous, opening up such far-reaching visions of world empire, that they more than counterbalance her disappointments in other parts. And for that reason, when we estimate the final and aggregate results of thirty years of German colonization, it would be as absurd to speak of German failure as it would be to speak of the failure of English colonization in the eighteenth century. It is true that in the eighteenth century England lost the United States, but she gained Canada and India. In the twentieth century Germany lost China and Morocco, but she gained Asia Minor; she has gained the Protectorate over the Turkish Empire.

In tracing the development of German expansion in Asia Minor, we shall find one additional proof of the absurdity of the German grievance which we discussed in a previous chapter, that England has pursued a policy systematically hostile to Germany. We shall

see that in the case of the Baghdad Railway not only have the Powers of the *Entente Cordiale* done nothing to oppose Germany, but that French statesmen have again and again promoted German claims, and that England in her desire to conciliate her neighbours has betrayed some vital Imperial interests, and has allowed Germany to assume a formidable position, threatening both Egypt and India, a position from which she is not likely to retreat, and yet from which she will have to retreat if an armed conflict is to be avoided.

## II.

When the history of the latter part of the nineteenth century comes to be written, few events will prove to have had greater intrinsic importance and to have produced more far-reaching results than the conventions of November 27, 1889, and of January 16, 1902,\* between his Imperial Majesty the Sultan of Turkey and the German company of the Anatolian railways, granting to the aforesaid company an extension of their railways from Konia to the Persian Gulf. That convention

\* See Chéradame, p. 29. The text of that secret convention has been first published by M. Chéradame, and translated by the *Novoie Vremya* (see Chéradame, p. 69).

marks a new era in the foreign policy of the German Empire. By that convention all the other great Powers were gradually to be eliminated from the Near East; by that convention Germany has secured by one stroke of the diplomatic pen what England and Russia have striven for generations to attain—*and a great deal more!* By that concession, not only was Germany destined to obtain in the near future a complete economic control over the Turkish dominions, which must sooner or later lead to a political protectorate; not only did Germany add to her sway the ancient empire of Semiramis and Nebuchadnezzar, of Cyrus and Haroun al Raschid, but there was also created thereby a situation fraught with permanent danger to the peace of Europe, a constant menace to all the Powers interested in those vast and wealthy regions, and, eventually, a complete readjustment, in favour of Germany, of the balance of world power.\*

That a mere engineering undertaking like the Baghdad Railway should be pregnant with such momentous consequences can only be strange to those who are ignorant of the political geography of Asia Minor, and who are not conversant with the enormous part played by railways in the colonial and foreign

\* See the brilliant paper of Dr. Dillon on the "Germanization of Europe" in the *Contemporary Review*, April 1906.

policy of our age. There was a time when the occupation and penetration of a foreign country took place by slow and peaceful steps—first the missionary, then the trader, then the consul, then the flag. Those were the antiquated British methods. To-day the railway engineer seems to be more and more the *deus ex machina* of colonization, and the soldier is almost certain to follow in his wake. Whether we consider the Chinese railways or the trans-Caspian or the trans-Siberian railways, colonization does follow the lines of communication; and the lines of communication are not merely commercial, but mainly political and strategical. Nor must we forget that in a semi-barbarous State like Asia Minor or Turkey, where there are few cities and where other routes are unsafe, the railways, by means of rates and freights and tariffs, practically regulate the whole trade and control the whole finances of the country.

We have just mentioned the trans-Siberian railway, and we have done so advisedly. It is impossible to consider the Baghdad Railway without thinking of Mr. Witte's great achievement. There is a most striking analogy between them. The German undertaking is, like the Russian, on a scale of such magnitude that it must inevitably create a situation which it is almost beyond the power of statesmanship

to control. Both undertakings are instruments of penetration into regions which are within the sphere of influence of the great Powers of Europe. As in the famous poem of Goethe, in both cases forces have been set loose which no spell of the political magician can set at rest again. The trans-Mesopotamian railway, when it is completed, and if Germany succeeds in her policy, will play in the Near East the same ominous part which the trans-Siberian played in the Far East; with this important difference, however, that whilst the Far Eastern conflict only involved one European Power and one Asiatic Power, the Near Eastern conflict, if it breaks out, must needs involve all the European Powers, must force the whole Eastern Question to a crisis, and, once begun, cannot be terminated until the map of Europe and Asia shall be reconstructed.

This, and nothing less, is implicitly contained in the Baghdad Railway. The sooner our earnest attention is concentrated on the mountain ranges of the Taurus, and the valleys of the Tigris and the Euphrates, the better it will be for the peace of the world. Dark clouds are gathering over the ruins of Nineveh and Babylon, which may burst into a political storm and cataclysm such as the world has not seen since Napoleonic times. Hitherto England has followed, with regard to the Baghdad Railway,



the most dangerous of all policies, the policy of "drift." The critical moment is drawing near when the Baghdad Railway will emerge from the tunnels of the Taurus Mountains and will work south towards the Persian Gulf and the British sphere of influence. Let England study the situation calmly and coolly whilst it is time; she will then be prepared to speak with no uncertain voice and to make a determined attempt in order to ward off the consequences.

### III.

We were perhaps not quite correct in stating that the Baghdad Railway concession marks a new era in the foreign policy of Germany. It marks rather an end than a beginning. It is the successful termination of a long series of diplomatic moves, the accomplishment of long-cherished ambitions. For forty years Germany had been seeking an outlet for her teeming population and her expanding industries. Hitherto emigration had seemed to be a sufficient outlet and a sufficient source of strength. But as Germany was becoming more and more the controlling power of the Continent, she refused to be contented with sending out millions of her sons, who, as mere emigrants to

foreign countries, were lost to the Vaterland.\* How different would the power of Germany have been, German Imperialists were ever repeating, if the 20,000,000 Teutons who have colonized the United States, or Brazil, or Argentina, and have been absorbed and Americanized and Saxonized, had settled in territories under the Imperial flag.

And thus Pan-Germanists have been looking towards every part of the horizon. They have first looked to the north and the north-west, and they have reflected that the Rhine ought to belong to the Vaterland; that Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Antwerp are the natural German harbours; that Denmark, Holland, and Flemish Belgium are the outposts of Germany for the transit commerce of Europe, and that all these outposts ought to be included either in an economic Zollverein or in a political confederation.†

But Germany wisely realized that those northern ambitions would meet with absolute resistance on the part of other Powers, that she was not yet strong enough to defy that resistance, and that this fulfilment of her aspirations must be postponed until she was

\* To-day the immigration into Germany exceeds the emigration.

† In Justus Perthes's widely scattered "Alldeutscher Atlas," edited by Paul Langhans, and published by the Alldeutscher Verband, both Holland and Flemish Belgium are considered and "coloured" as an integral part of the future German Empire.

prepared to fight for the mastery of the sea. In the meantime, she contented herself with *peacefully* annexing the commerce of the Flemish and Dutch ports, with building up a mercantile and a war navy, with advocating the historical maritime philosophy of Captain Mahan, and with repeating on every occasion the famous note of warning: "*Unsere Zukunft ist auf dem Wasser.*" Biding her time, and following the line of least resistance, Germany for the last twenty years therefore extended steadily towards the south and towards the east. Towards the south she saw two decaying empires, Austria-Hungary and Turkey, which seemed to be a natural prey for her political and commercial ambitions: two conglomerates of hostile races which are waiting for a master. Towards the east she saw one of the most ancient seats of human civilization, a huge and rich territory, which is the one great country, in close proximity to Europe, which is still left unoccupied and undeveloped. On those three empires Germany set her heart, and with the method and determination which always characterize her she set to work. And with an equally characteristic spirit this gigantic scheme of commercial and political absorption of three empires, from the Upper Danube to the Persian Gulf, was being explained away and justified by an all comprehensive watchword: the "*Drang*

*nach Osten."* It was only in response to this irresistible call and impulse, this *Drang* and pressure, it was only to obey a historical mission, that the Teuton was going to regenerate the crumbling empires of Austria, of Turkey, and of Asia Minor.

In the first place, let us consider for one moment the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. It is now fifty years since, through the battle of Sadowa, Austria-Hungary was ousted from the German Confederation. The same reasons which impelled Protestant Prussia to drive Catholic Austria from the Germanic Confederation are still in large measure subsisting to-day, and I do not think that the Hohenzollern has any intention of forcing the Habsburg into the confederation again, merely to obey the behests of the Pan-Germanists. Prussia has no interest whatever in reopening the ancient dualism of North and South, in re-establishing the two poles and antipodes, Berlin and Vienna. *As a matter of a fact, ever since 1870, Austria-Hungary has been far more useful to German aims in her present dependent condition than if she were an integral part of the Confederation.* In continental politics as well as in colonial politics, a disguised protectorate may be infinitely preferable to virtual annexation. The protectorate of Tunis has given far less trouble to France than the colony of Algeria. And for all practical interests

and purposes, Austria-Hungary has become a German dependency. She has been drawn into the orbit of the Triple Alliance. She follows the political fortunes of the predominant partner. She almost forms part of the German Zollverein, in that her tariffs are systematically favourable to her northern neighbour. *But above all, Austria-Hungary renders to Germany the inestimable service both of "civilizing"—that is, of "Germanizing"—the inferior races, the Slavs, and of keeping them in check. It is a very disagreeable and difficult task, which Germany infinitely prefers to leave to Austria rather than to assume herself.* And it is a task for which, as Professor Lamprecht, the national historian, is compelled to admit, the Austrian German seems far more qualified than the Prussian German. And Germany can thus entirely devote herself to her world ambitions, whilst Austria is entirely absorbed by her racial conflict—for the King of Prussia!

For the last twenty-five years the process of Germanizing has been going on without interruption. A bitter war of races and languages is being waged between the Austrian German and the Magyar, between the Teuton and the Slav. Of the Slav, the Austrian Teuton wants to make his political slave. To him "Slav" and "slave" are synonymous words; and when we consider that the Slavs are disunited in language and religion, and that they hate each other



almost as cordially as they hate the *Niemets*; and when we further consider that behind the ten millions of Austrian Germans there will be sixty-five millions of other Germans to support them, whilst the Catholic Tcheches and Poles can only fall back on the support of abhorred and heretical Russia, there is every reason to fear that the Slav must eventually come under the economic and political control of the Austrian Germans—that is to say, ultimately under the influence of the German Empire.

But it is not only the Slavs of the Austrian Empire that are threatened by German absorption; that absorption has rapidly extended to the Slav States of the Balkan Peninsula. On the south as well as on the north of the Danube, Austria has been used as the “catspaw,” or, to use the more dignified expression of Emperor William, as the “loyal *Sekundant*” of the Hohenzollern. The occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in defiance of the Treaty of Berlin, was the beginning of that Austrian “*Drang nach Osten*” policy, the next object of which is the possession of the Gulf of Salonica, and the ultimate object of which is the control of Constantinople.

In a striking article published in the *Nineteenth Century*, 1905, Sir Harry Johnston gave definite expression to the Eastern aspirations of the Hohenzollern, and the political programme

he outlines is to-day the programme of the majority of thoughtful and far-seeing Germans :—

“The German Empire of the future will be, or should be, a congeries of big and little States, semi-dependent in many respects, bound together by allegiance to a supreme emperor, by a common customs union, an army and navy for the defence of their mutual interests. This empire will include the present German kingdoms, duchies, principalities, and republics, and, in addition, a kingdom of Hungary, kingdoms of Roumania, Servia, Bulgaria, principalities of Croatia, Montenegro, Macedonia, a republic of Byzantium, a sultanate of Anatolia, a republic of Trebizond, an emirate of Mosul, a dependency of Mesopotamia; the whole of this mosaic bound together by bands and seams of German cement. Wherever there is vacant land and a suitable climate German colonies will be established, as they have been in Transylvania and Syria (as also in Southern Russia and in the Caucasus). The territories of this German League would thus stretch from Hamburg and Holstein on the Baltic and on the North Sea to Trieste and the Adriatic, to Constantinople and the *Ægean*, to the Gulf of Alexandretta, to the Euphrates and the frontiers of Persia.

“There might still be a Sultan of Turkey, but he would reside at some appropriate capital in Mohammedan Asia Minor, with a German resident at his court, and, at first, with Germans to teach him sound finance and good government. In joining this German League, Austria-Hungary, Bohemia, Roumania, Bulgaria, Servia, Montenegro would enjoy the same freedom and independence as are attributed at the present day to the kingdom of Saxony or the kingdom of Bavaria. The emperor of this great confederation might be a German and a Hohenzollern, and he might fix his residence at Berlin or at

Vienna ; but that would be merely because at the present day the kingdom of Prussia is superior in population and power to any one of the States mentioned as forming part of this League.

"Perhaps the beneficent work of Rome, which was shattered by the uprising of Mohammed, may be again rebuilt upon a surer basis. Britain and Ireland, France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal may band together to do the work of the Western empire ; while Germany and her Magyar, Slav, Ruman, and Greek allies restore the edifice which Constantine founded at Byzantium. Some of my readers may live long enough to see William the Second or Frederick the Fourth crowned in Saint Sophia, Emperor of the Nearer East."

To pave the way to the realization of these glorious aspirations, Austria has used every means to justify her intervention ; she has consistently followed the traditional principle of the Habsburg monarchy of "*divide ut imperes.*" She has prevented all understanding between Servia and Bulgaria. With regard to Servia it is not too much to say that, politically as well as economically, she is completely in the grip of her Austrian neighbour, and any one conversant with the history of contemporary Servia knows that Austrian intrigues are at the root of all the internal troubles of that distracted country. I remember the present King of Servia, whilst discussing with me in 1905 the Austro-Servian relations, saying in a tone of melancholy resignation : "*Que voulez-vous ; nous devons passer sous les fourches caudines de l'Autriche.*" Austria

has exploited for her own ends the dynastic quarrel between the Obrenovitch and the Kara-georgevitch. King Milan openly followed the Austrian policy which was the cause of his fall. It was Austria that made him declare a fratricidal war against Bulgaria. It has been, and still is, the systematic policy of Austria to prevent any railways being built by Servia, which might provide outlets for her trade—for instance, on the Adriatic Sea—and which would make her independent of Austria. At present, as eighty per cent. of Servian exports must go into Hungary, Servia is absolutely at the mercy of her northern neighbour, as recent events have only too clearly shown. In the year of grace 1906 Servia and Bulgaria concluded a Zollverein: as a preliminary step to that future federation desired by all far-sighted patriots in the Balkans, and as a preliminary step to an *entente cordiale* on the Macedonian Question. As soon as this Zollverein was declared, Austria broke off the negotiations for a renewal of the Treaty of Commerce with Servia. There came a deadlock. Servian farmers were threatened with ruin. Servia had to submit to the terms of the Austrian Government, which compelled her to buy her chief imports, including guns and ammunition, in the Austrian markets, and which made Servia more than ever into a vassal State of the Austrian Empire.

It may be objected that the triumph of Austrian Germany, acting as the vanguard and "loyal *Sekundant*" of the Hohenzollern, and bringing under Teutonic control all the Slav races on both sides of the Danube, must still take many years for its realization. That may be so ; but certainly the same objection cannot be made with regard to Turkey. The absorption of Turkey is not a distant dream, it is very nearly an accomplished fact. Twenty-five years ago Germany declared she had no political stake in the affairs of Turkey. As recently as the 'seventies, Bismarck proclaimed in Parliament that the Eastern Question was not worth the loss of one Pomeranian soldier.\*

To-day Germany is wellnigh supreme on the Bosphorus. She started by sending military instructors, amongst whom was the famous general Von der Goltz Pasha, and by reorganizing the Turkish army on the German model. She then sent her travellers, absorbing the commerce of the country. She then sent her engineers, obtaining concessions, building railways, and practically obtaining the control of the so-called "Oriental" line. Finally, she became the self-appointed doctor of the "sick man." Whenever the illness of recent years came to a crisis—after

\* As recently as March 19, 1903, Prince von Bülow also declared: "Germany does not practice in the East any active policy." Such is the language of diplomacy, intended not to express our thoughts and to reveal our intentions, but carefully to hide them.



the Armenian and the Macedonian atrocities, after the Cretan insurrection—Germany stepped in and paralyzed the action of Europe. It was Germany that not only enabled Turkey to crush Greece and to restore her military prestige, it was Germany that enabled her to reap the fruits of victory.

For ten years Lohengrin appeared as the temporal providence, the protector of Abdul Hamid. The Holy Roman Emperor appeared as the saviour of the Commander of the Faithful. A Power which did not have one Mohammedan subject claimed to protect two hundred million Mohammedans. And when, in 1897, Emperor William went on his memorable pilgrimage to Jerusalem, this latter-day pilgrim entered into a solemn compact with a sovereign still reeking from the blood of 200,000 Christians. The Cross made an unholy alliance with the Crescent.

This alliance, coinciding with the journey to Jerusalem, marked a further step in the forward movement, in the "*Drang nach Osten*" policy. It was the third and the last stage, and by far the most important one. It was obvious that, on the European side of the Bosphorus, Germany could not make much further progress for some years to come. The times were not ripe. International jealousies might be prematurely roused, all the more so

because neither the German Kaiser nor his subjects have the discretion and modesty of success. But on the Asiatic side there extended a vast Asiatic inheritance, to which, as yet, there was no European claimant ; to which already, forty years ago, German patriots like Moltke, German economists like Roscher and List had drawn the attention of the Vaterland—a country with a healthy climate and with infinite resources as yet undeveloped. This was to be in the immediate future the field of German colonization. On his way to Jerusalem the German Emperor pressed once more his devoted friend the Sultan for an extension of German enterprise in Asia Minor. The concession of the railway to Baghdad was granted, and a new and marvellous horizon opened before the Hohenzollern.

#### IV.

The Baghdad Railway will connect Haidar Pasha, one of the Asiatic suburbs of Constantinople, with one of the harbours conceded to Germany on the Persian Gulf. And already German engineers are planning to connect the Asiatic terminus, by means of an underground tunnel, with the European side of Constantinople and with the European railway which is already

under German management. At the one end a German company will control the quays and eventually the customs, and at the other end she will have the ports of Baghdad, Bassorah, and a harbour still to be determined on in the Persian Gulf.

The original plan of the Anatolian company had been to follow the northern route *viâ* Angora, Shivas, Djarbekir, following almost exactly the imperial road of the Romans, avoiding the mountainous ranges of the Taurus, passing through flourishing cities and entering by a gentle slope the plain of Nineveh. This route was both the quickest, the most convenient, and the cheapest. But Russia opposed her veto.\* This northern line would have been a standing menace to her Armenian and Transcaucasian possessions. In case of a war between Turkey and Russia, the railway would have been a splendid strategic line to quickly mobilize the Turkish army and to pour troops into Transcaucasia.

The Anatolian company had therefore to follow the southern line, taking during the first part the route followed by Cyrus and the Ten Thousand in one of the most famous expeditions of antiquity. Every English public-school boy who reads his "Anabasis" can therefore follow the general direction of the German

\* Convention of 1900.

engineers ; first the valley of the Meander, then the ascent and the descent of the Taurus, then the plains of Mesopotamia. The ascent and the descent of the Taurus involves considerable engineering difficulties and an enormous expenditure, estimated at five or six millions sterling.

But not only has the German company received the concession of the trans-Mesopotamian highway, *but it has also secured practical control of most of the branch railways already in existence.* Two of these, and the most important, were in the hands of the French, and they were bought up : one line, Smyrna to Afium-Karahissar, being the direct trade route with Smyrna ; the other, Mersina to Adana, giving access to the Gulf of Alexandretta. By an irade of 1910 the Baghdad Railway Company has obtained the concession of the port of Alexandretta, which will eventually become one of the most important commercial centres of the Mediterranean.

And finally, the German company has obtained the concession of the enormous line which it is proposed to establish between Aleppo, Damascus, and Mecca—the line which will be taken by all the pilgrims to the city of the Prophet. *Et nunc erudimini gentes !* Even the Holy Land will become a German province. The network of German railways will radiate from Mecca to Constantinople, and

from Smyrna to the Persian Gulf. One terminus will be within twelve hours of Egypt, another terminus will be within four days of Bombay !

## V.

But perhaps the most important political consequence of the Baghdad scheme remains still to be noticed. The Baghdad line must ultimately mean the *strengthening and the tightening of the German protectorate over European Turkey*. In any case, the commercial control of Asia Minor must lead to a political control, and the political control of Anatolia, the cradle and centre of Turkish power, must sooner or later place Turkey at the mercy of Germany. But there are in the different agreements between the Turkish Government and the Baghdad Railway Company special financial provisions which must precipitate this undesirable consummation. There are clauses which must produce results which it is impossible to calculate, and the gravity of which it is impossible to over-estimate.

These clauses are to the effect that the Turkish Government will guarantee to the railway company a sum of 16,000 francs per kilometre. Now the most hopeful calculations only promise a return of 4,000 francs per kilo-



metre. Some calculations reach as low a figure as 1,000 francs. It is not necessary to enter here into the details of the financial arrangements and of the "kilometric" guarantees secured by the German company. One thing is certain, that those arrangements and guarantees will prove for many years a considerable drain on the Turkish Treasury. No doubt, after thirty or forty years, when the mineral resources of Asia Minor will have been tapped, when the agricultural resources of Mesopotamia will have been developed by irrigation, the country may yet become one of the richest tracts of the world, as it is naturally one of the most fertile. It may again become what it has repeatedly been in antiquity and in the Middle Ages—"a garden where the bird can fly from tree to tree from Baghdad to the sea." But in the meantime large tracts of garden are turned into a desert; others are infested by hordes of Kurds, who plunder the Turkish officials after they have finished murdering their Armenian victims. This plague of brigandage is such that the German Consul-General, sent to investigate on the spot, has declared *that it would require two army corps to guard the line of railway.\**

There can be no doubt also that under wise management the Turkish Government would

\* What splendid opportunities this may eventually afford for military intervention.

be able to recover the millions spent on the German railway. But whoever knows anything about Turkish finances and their state of chronic bankruptcy, knows that the Turkish Treasury may be placed in a position where it will be unable to pay the annual guarantee. To pay herself eventually the German company has obtained sureties. These sureties put the Turkish Government in bondage. In a very few years Turkey will find herself in the position of a bankrupt who has surrendered all her substance to a usurer. Turkey will find herself in the same position in which Egypt found herself before 1880—with this important difference, that in Egypt all the Powers had the financial control, *whilst in Turkey Germany alone would rule supreme*. In fact, the Sultan of Turkey will become a vassal of Germany. Already under Abdul Hamid the Turkish Government took its orders from the German ambassador. Abdul Hamid reigned, but Baron Marschall von Bieberstein ruled. It was thought that the Young Turks educated in London and Paris would shake off the yoke of Berlin. As a matter of fact, under the new militarist régime, the alliance between the two Governments is closer than before.

When Emperor William undertook in 1897 the journey to Jerusalem which was to secure to the Vaterland such a political triumph,

when his fertile imagination was first haunted by that glorious vision which, once realized, would make the Hohenzollern—the Holy Roman Emperor—more powerful than Charlemagne or Napoleon, did he expect that less than fifteen years would see the realization of that vision, and that the establishment of a virtual German Protectorate would be the great achievement of his reign ?

## VI.

The more we examine the political aspects of the Baghdad problem, the more we wonder at the extraordinary rapidity with which Germany has overcome what might have proved insuperable obstacles, the more we realize that the so-called systematic opposition on the part of France and England is a mischievous legend, fabricated by German publicists in search of a grievance.

It is easy enough to see how the Sultan of Turkey should have been persuaded to grant the concession. During his reign Abdul Hamid was surrounded on all sides by implacable enemies, and he naturally turned to the protection of the great military Power of the West. Moreover, in Turkish eyes, the danger of the future was still Russia ; and in case of a conflict with Russia, the network of railways conceded to Germany might be utilized for strategic

purposes: they would immensely strengthen the military position of Turkey.

It is also easy enough to see why the Russians, after securing that the Baghdad Railway should not take a northern direction, and follow the line of least resistance *via* Angora, Shivas, Djarbekir, and into the Mesopotamian plain, should cease to interfere, and should let Germany, France, and England fight out their differences.

But it is not easy, indeed it is impossible, to understand how France and England without a protest should have allowed Germany to take possession of a country where the English had vital political interests, over which the French had exerted a religious protectorate for many centuries, in which they had universities and schools, and which indeed had come to be called the "France of the Levant."\*

With regard to France, not only did she not make a firm stand to defend legitimate claims and an established position, but she actually offered to lend her own money and her political influence to further the schemes of her rivals. The German people were not prepared to sink vast sums in the Baghdad scheme, as the French people had sunk hundreds of millions for Suez and Panama. The German millions were urgently wanted at home, and if the

\* See M. Etienne Lamy's striking volume, "La France du Levant."

Baghdad Railway was to be built it would have to be built mainly with foreign money. The German Concessionaires had insuperable difficulty in finding the indispensable working capital, and they induced French financiers to subscribe part of the money. The French had to accept for themselves all the financial risks. The Germans reserved to themselves all the advantages, all the securities, and the sole economic and political control! A German railway largely built with French money—this is what the Germans call the systematic opposition of France! When the secret history of the Baghdad Railway is revealed, it will become obvious that the interests of France were betrayed mainly by M. Rouvier and his syndicate. We have it on the authority of M. Chéradame that M. Rouvier, before becoming French Minister of Finance and Prime Minister, controlled a private bank which had extensive dealings with the omnipotent Deutsche Bank, and which was financially interested in the great German railway scheme. Indeed, M. Rouvier, a French Minister of Finance and Prime Minister, appears as the financial agent and mandatory of the Deutsche Bank.\*

\* "All the leading men whom I have met in Turkey, Frenchmen or foreigners—and amongst these many consuls and members of the diplomatic body—consider M. Rouvier as the very active collaborator of German policy in Turkey; nay, the word has been used to me, as the agent of the Deutsche Bank." Chéradame, p. 275.



Hence the efforts of M. Rouvier to further the policy of Germany. Hence the systematic support of the French Ambassador, M. Constans, acting under the instructions of M. Delcassé. Hence the official denials of M. Delcassé in the French Chamber, notwithstanding undoubted facts.\* Hence the extraordinary *entente cordiale* between France and Germany on a scheme which was to make Germany supreme, which was to give the death-blow to French influence, and which would be a constant menace to Russia, the loyal ally of the French Republic.

The history of French foreign policy for the last twenty years is not always pleasant reading ; † but I do not know of any sadder page in that history than the staggering negotiations between the German Concessionaires and the French financiers and diplomats. In the French Chamber the scheme was branded as a new "Panama."

Perhaps we may find a more charitable explanation than the one suggested by M. Chéradame. It is true that our explanation would exonerate those responsible from the accusation of dishonesty, but it would only do so by laying them open to the charge of imbecility. The Germans, it was contended, were bent on having

\* See *Journal Officiel*, p. 1,468, parliamentary debate of March 24, 1902.

† See the admirable and illuminating recent volume of René Millet, with preface by M. Hanotaux.

their concession ; they could not possibly be ousted from the field ; their influence was supreme with the Sultan. Why should the French not have made the most of a hopeless situation ? Why should they not at least claim a share in the building of the railway ? By contributing forty per cent. of the capital to the Baghdad Railway, might they not reasonably expect to exert a proportional influence and control over the undertaking ?

If M. Rouvier or M. Constans or M. Delcassé ever honestly did entertain these hopes, they have been sadly deceived. And they ought to have been warned by the unrest and indignation which the Franco-German *entente cordiale* excited amongst their allies the Russians.\* The French investor would no doubt have a proportional risk in the railway, and before it was built many millions of French money would be lost in the plains of Babylon ! But the management and control was, and will remain, German. The Germans themselves meant this to be clearly understood, and cannot be accused of any double dealing. They did not even trouble to conceal their game.

The original plan of the financiers of the Deutsche Bank, the great instrument of German

\* See the comments of the *Novoie Vremya* at the time when M. Constans was trying his best to carry through the unification of the Ottoman Debt.

penetration in Turkey, was only too clear. The financial co-operation of France was indispensable. The French investors, with their usual gullibility, and coaxed by M. Rouvier and his friends, would have taken up fifty, or perhaps seventy or eighty per cent.\* of the shares at a very high figure. From the necessity of the situation and the inevitable incipient difficulties in the construction of the railway, the shares would very soon fall very low. The German syndicate would then have bought up the whole stock, and thereby would have made the financial scheme possible for the German banks. The Baghdad Railway with the Deutsche Bank would have exactly repeated the history of the Ottoman railways with M. de Hitsch.

Whatever may be the true explanation of the Franco-German *entente* on the Baghdad Railway, it will probably be considered by future historians as the most extraordinary chapter in the history of contemporary French diplomacy. *And this Franco-German episode seems to me to be the true key to the Moroccan crisis.* In the Baghdad Railway affair Germany had had an excellent opportunity of studying the strange influences at work in French foreign policy. Germany saw how easily she had ousted France from Asia

\* Eighty per cent. was the figure given by M. Etienne, the former War Secretary and leader of the French Colonial Party.

Minor, where French claims were so strong. Why should she not easily oust her neighbours from another sphere of influence? In both cases German diplomacy, if unscrupulous, was successful, *and, as against French diplomacy, deserved to be successful.* In both cases France was lamentably led astray by those in control of her foreign policy. In both emergencies—and that is the real explanation of the bewildering blunders and inconsistencies of French diplomacy—France was too much distracted by her internal quarrels and by the vital question of the separation between Church and State to give any heed to her international position.

## VII.

In her Near Eastern policy English diplomacy has not been influenced by the sordid motives which have influenced French diplomacy. There have been no secret combinations and syndicates of politicians and financiers working against the interests of their country. Yet in the end the interests of England have been betrayed quite as effectually by English statesmen as by French statesmen, and those English interests are incomparably more important. For the Baghdad Railway threatens the Imperial future of Britain on at least two vital points. The south-eastern

section between Baghdad and the Persian Gulf threatens India, the south-western section between Aleppo, Damascus, and Mecca threatens Egypt.

German publicists, of course, will tell us that these dangers are purely imaginary, and that those suspicions only prove the hostile feelings of those who make them. But we have, alas! too many and too convincing proofs that the danger is very far from being imaginary. The following statement by Dr. Paul Rohrbach tells its own tale and needs no commentary, and is all the more singular when it is remembered that Dr. Rohrbach is one of the most authoritative exponents of German foreign policy, that he is a man of moderate opinions and what is called a "sound" man, and a regular contributor to Radical as well as National-Liberal periodicals.

"One factor and one alone will determine the possibility of a successful issue for Germany in such a conflict: whether or not we succeed in placing England in a perilous position. A direct attack upon England across the North Sea is out of the question; the prospect of a German invasion of England is a fantastic dream. It is necessary to discover another combination in order to hit England in a vulnerable spot—and here we come to the point where the relationship of Germany to Turkey and the conditions prevailing in Turkey become of decisive importance for German foreign policy, based as it now is upon watchfulness in the direction of England . . . England can be attacked and mortally wounded by land from Europe only in one place—Egypt. The loss of Egypt



would mean for England not only the end of her dominion over the Suez Canal, and of her connections with India and the Far East, but would probably entail the loss also of her possessions in Central and East Africa. The conquest of Egypt by a Mohammedan Power, like Turkey, would also imperil England's hold over her sixty million Mohammedan subjects in India, besides prejudicing her relations with Afghanistan and Persia. Turkey, however, can never dream of recovering Egypt until she is mistress of a developed railway system in Asia Minor and Syria, and until, through the progress of the Anatolian Railway to Baghdad, she is in a position to withstand an attack by England upon Mesopotamia. The Turkish army must be increased and improved, and progress must be made in her economic and financial position . . . The stronger Turkey grows, the more dangerous does she become for England . . . Egypt is a prize which for Turkey would be well worth the risk of taking sides with Germany in a war with England. *The policy of protecting Turkey, which is now pursued by Germany, has no other object but the desire to effect an insurance against the danger of a war with England.*" \*

At the beginning of this chapter I stated that England, so far from opposing German expansion in the Near East, had betrayed some vital interests of the empire in her desire to conciliate her German neighbours. Those who have taken the trouble to follow the argument contained in these preceding pages, those who will give careful consideration to the weighty utterances and admissions of Dr. Rohrbach, and those who, apart from any such admissions,

\* Rohrbach's "Die Bagdadbahn," pp. 18, 19. Berlin, 1911.

merely think out the necessary trend of German politics and the logic of events, will be little inclined to accuse me of any exaggeration. And certainly if British public opinion is not enlightened as to the true nature of German expansion in the Near East, it will not be for lack of due warning on the part of our German rivals. For it must be confessed that, with all their shortcomings, there is one reproach from which they are singularly free, and for which they are often most unjustly accused—namely, the reproach of deceitfulness. German diplomacy may be contradictory and jerky, but it certainly is not deceitful. So far from working in the dark, the German politician trumpets his schemes, blurts out his intentions, and by forewarning his competitors gives them ample opportunity to forearm themselves. In the case of the Baghdad Railway, the forewarnings have been so numerous that the neglect to profit by them would be inexcusable. If, indeed, as Dr. Rohrbach tells us, the ultimate aim of German policy in the Near East is not peaceful penetration and commercial expansion, but the building of strategic railways, and the threatening of Egypt and India, then obviously the bounden duty of English statesmen is not to advance any further in the path of concession, but to speak out with no uncertain voice ; to call a halt, to demand the

neutralization of Mesopotamia to the south of Baghdad, and generally to oppose a vigorous *non possumus* to the political control of those parts of Asia where England has vital Imperial interests.

## THE SECOND GERMAN GRIEVANCE.

*Has England hemmed in Germany?*

WE are now coming to the second German grievance against this country. It is contended that England has tempted and seduced the friends and allies of Germany; that she has stirred up Europe against her; that she has hemmed her in, encircled her, isolated her; that Edward the Seventh was the arch-plotter in the diplomatic drama; that England has been the disturbing factor in international politics, and that in the *Concert* of Europe she has wrested the conductor's baton from the hands of the Kaiser.

It is certain that the position of Germany in 1911 is not what it was in 1871. For thirty years Germany was the one supreme power in Europe. To-day the equilibrium has been restored, and Germany has fallen from her high estate. But can it be said that England is responsible for the new grouping of Powers, and is that new grouping directed against Germany, or inspired by any hostility to the

German people? A brief history of the international relations since 1871 will place the facts in their true light, and will dispose of the mischievous myth of an anti-German conspiracy initiated and led by England. In 1871 France was standing alone in the wilderness. She was humiliated and paralyzed, and at the mercy of any German attack. Germany's supremacy was unquestioned. She was the umpire of the Continent. She dictated her own terms to the other Powers, or acted as the "honest broker" in settling their differences, and the brokerage which she claimed for her services was a heavy one.

The Treaty of Berlin in 1878 was the high-water mark of German influence. In appearance it was a triumph for England, and Beaconsfield was acclaimed by the London mob when he brought back "peace with honour"; but in reality the Treaty of Berlin was a triumph for Germany. After a victorious campaign Russia had obtained nothing. Without striking a blow Austria, as the German ally, had obtained Bosnia-Herzegovina. It was the beginning of the Eastern policy, of the "*Drang nach Osten*" of the Habsburg monarchy. The possession of a Mediterranean outlet became henceforth the aim of Austrian policy; and whereas the gates of Constantinople seemed closed for ever against Russia, the gates of Salonica were half opened



to Austria, and allured her from the distance. And whilst Austria was preparing to reduce Servia to vassalage, Germany was demanding payment for her services from Turkey, whom she had saved from Russian ambitions. The early 'eighties marked the beginning of German penetration in the Near East. The German Emperor was preparing to become the Supreme Protector of Mohammedanism.

What the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 had been in Continental politics, the Conference of Berlin in 1884 proved to be in colonial politics. The Conference of Berlin once again proved the supremacy of Germany in European diplomacy, and it also proved how entirely Germany was determined to concentrate all her energies on retaining that supremacy. It is true that Bismarck accepted a few tropical and sub-tropical regions in different parts of the world to satisfy a noisy minority, but it cannot be sufficiently emphasized that he remained in principle hostile to colonial expansion. Let France waste her energies and find a safety-valve for her restless spirit in oversea adventure; let her get embroiled with Italy in the Mediterranean and with England in every part of the world. She would become all the more harmless in Europe. As for Germany, she would not let herself be deluded by the mirage of the African desert, and sacrifice the substance

for the shadow. Perhaps Bismarck was harbouring afterthoughts. Perhaps he was only opposed to a colonial policy because he thought it premature. Does not experience show that colonization in its preliminary stages is always ruinous? If in course of time French colonial expansion were to prove remunerative, Germany could always step in and pluck the tropical fruit when it was mature. Whether Bismarck had those afterthoughts or not it is difficult to say. He has not revealed them in his "Reminiscences." And whatever his ultimate motive in the meantime, he certainly thought that the real historical mission of Germany was on the Continent, and her highest ambition to direct the politics of the Old World.

But at the very moment when Bismarck was sacrificing a colonial empire to the control of European politics, that control was beginning to slip from his grasp. The Iron Chancellor had made an irretrievable mistake in 1878, and alienated for ever the Russian people. He had been scared, like England, by the imminence of the Russian danger. He had treated a victorious ally as if he had been a vanquished enemy. The hereditary hatred between the Slav and the Teuton revived, and would have led to an immediate conflict between the two Powers if at that critical moment, immediately after the Turkish War, the Russian Government had not

been paralyzed by the great Nihilist crisis which culminated in the assassination of the Czar.

After the Treaty of Berlin a Franco-Russian understanding was unavoidable. France and Russia were drawn together by common grievances and common interests.

Bismarck realized his mistake when it was too late, and he devoted the last years of his rule to a determined attempt to restore the understanding between Germany and Russia. In order to prevent the Franco-Russian Alliance he was even prepared to sacrifice the alliance with Austria. But what had been done could not be undone. Popular feeling in Russia was such that even Alexander the Third had to give way. That the most reactionary Government which Europe had seen since Nicholas the First—that the régime of Pobiedonostseff should ally itself with a revolutionary republic—that a Czar whose father was the martyr of Nihilism, and who himself was a bigoted Orthodox Churchman, should conquer his most inveterate religious and political prejudices and accept an alliance with a nation of rebels and anti-Clericals—proved how irresistible was the pressure of public opinion in the Russian Empire, and how profound the hatred of Germany. The Franco-Russian demonstrations at Cronstadt and Toulon evoked equal enthusiasm in the autocratic monarchy and in the radical republic.

But however uneasy Germany might be about Russia, she felt easy and reassured about England. The conclusion of the Franco-Russian Alliance only seemed to consolidate the *entente* of England with Germany. Those were the days when England, always anxious about the Russian advance towards India, was proclaiming that the oasis of Merv was the "key" of India, and when the English people had periodical fits of "Mervousness." On the other hand, Bismarck had succeeded only too well in embroiling France and Italy, and France and England. The old colonial rivalry which marked the eighteenth century also disturbed the end of the nineteenth, and was soon to culminate in Fashoda. As the alliance between France and Russia was consolidated by the common fear of Germany, the *entente* between England and Germany was assured by a common distrust of France and Russia.

The Anglo-German *entente* was still further consolidated by dynastic ties, and it continued undisturbed for nearly a quarter of a century. Mr. Chamberlain was as loyal to it as Lord Salisbury, and Lord Rosebery supported it as enthusiastically as Mr. Chamberlain. The cession of Heligoland in 1890 proves how absolute was the trust in the friendship of Germany. Little did English statesmen of the day foresee that Heligoland would soon be

fortified into a formidable naval base against England. The famous Leicester speech of Mr. Chamberlain in 1899 was the programme of a union of the three branches of the Teutonic stock, the Triple Alliance of the future.

But when Mr. Chamberlain made his famous declaration of 1899, clouds were already gathering and threatening the Anglo-German friendship. The feeling of the English people towards the German people had never been heartily reciprocated. Any student of German political literature will be edified on that point; but hitherto the German Government had been co-operating with the British Government. From the early 'nineties the parallel lines began to diverge, and ambitions were being awakened which could only be realized in opposition to England. The Kruger telegram of 1896, supposed to have been drawn up by the late German Ambassador, Marschall von Bieberstein, as Foreign Secretary, clearly indicated in which direction the German mind was moving and the German wind was blowing, for the telegram was not an "impulsive" act of the Kaiser; it was deliberate, and Emperor William was only the spokesman of German public opinion. The outbreak of the Transvaal War and the checks suffered by England were the occasion of a wild outburst of anti-British feeling which continued all through the duration



of the war, and which has never ceased to manifest itself since. The German people were convinced that the end of the British Empire was in sight, that England was an effete Power, and that Germany was destined to be in the near future the universal legatee of the British Empire.

One fact is certain: the end of the Transvaal War marks the beginning of the German *Weltpolitik* on a grand scale. Germany put in claims on every continent, and set herself with feverish haste to develop her naval power to support her claims. The new Naval Bill was passed in 1900. In 1902 Germany negotiated with France for a harbour and a naval base on the west coast of Morocco. In 1902 she made a naval demonstration against Venezuela. Obviously Germany was determined to lose no time in building up her world empire.

The anti-British feeling and the aggressive spirit which animated the German people at last opened the eyes of England. She realized the danger which threatened Europe from German supremacy and England from German naval ambitions. The Transvaal War had revealed the weak spots of British military organization, and the pressing demand for drastic social reforms severely taxed financial resources, which would otherwise have been devoted to the expansion of the army and navy. Eng-

land could not afford to retain the "splendid" isolation which had characterized her recent policy. It was all the more necessary to draw nearer to France and Russia, and to join the international system, because Russia had been weakened by the Japanese disasters, and was temporarily paralyzed by a protracted civil war, and France was not strong enough to oppose single-handed the solid *bloc* of the Triple Alliance.

It was the pressure of those circumstances and the consciousness of a national and European peril which dictated the policy associated with Edward the Seventh, and which the Germans themselves have called the "*Edwardsche Politik*." That pressure imposed the necessity of a system of understandings which would be a sufficient counterpoise to German omnipotence. Such a pressure alone could have rendered possible, a few years after Fashoda, an Anglo-French *entente* and could have put an end to the old colonial rivalry of the two countries. Such a pressure alone could have brought together and reconciled, a few years after the Japanese Alliance, three Powers which had opposed each other for nearly a century.

The "Edwardian Policy" marks a new era in the history of European diplomacy. Both the aim and the methods were equally novel. For the object in view implied the rupture of

a long-standing friendship, and the close co-operation with two hereditary enemies; and the methods were little short of a revolution. The personal policy of Edward the Seventh, and the fact of a British monarch becoming his own Foreign Secretary, were contrary, if not to the spirit of the British Constitution, at least to the traditions of the British Foreign Office; but the necessity was so urgent and the personal diplomacy was so successful that English democracy accepted the accomplished fact.

Whilst the Triple Entente was thus consolidated, the Triple Alliance was gradually becoming dislocated. France and Italy had quarrelled on the question of Tunis. They were reconciled on the question of Tripoli. Popular feeling in Italy was becoming increasingly hostile to the Austro-German Alliance. Italian democracy looked with misgiving at an understanding with Prussia, which was the mainstay of reaction, and Italian nationalism looked with distrust at an understanding with Austria, which was holding Trieste in defiance of Italian aspirations.

The Triple Alliance, therefore, had virtually been transformed into a Dual Alliance. In case of war Germany could only fall back on Austria. But even here Germany was not without anxious doubts as to the future. It is true that Austria had given a qualified support

to Germany at the Algeciras Conference, and Germany rewarded her "loyal *Sekundant*" by supporting her in the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. But would Germany always be able to rely on the co-operation of the Dual Monarchy? Might not a fatal course of events in the near future relax the union of the two empires? For the Austrian Empire is a federation, and a federation in which the Germans are only a small minority. Hitherto the minority have ruled, not because of their intrinsic superiority, but because of the racial and religious differences which separated the majority. The Austrians are clamouring for expansion in the Near East. But might not this cry defeat its own purpose? They have secured Bosnia-Herzegovina. But the more they expand into non-German territory, the more the German population will be outnumbered by the Slavs. And if Austria did reach Salonica—if Servia were annexed to the Habsburg Empire—would not the balance of power be definitely transferred to the Slav races?

Nor must we forget, in trying to understand German anxieties about the future, that the advance of Bulgaria was creating a new factor in the Balkans, and that the recent revolution of Young Turkey might prove in the end a severe blow to German power. For had not the recent revolution been accomplished against

Germany by reformers who, on the one hand, had received their political education in England and France, and who, on the other hand, were aggressive Nationalists? And would not the new régime be a reversal of the old Turkish régime, controlled by German advisers? Prudence might no doubt compel the Young Turks to humour the Hohenzollern, but the intimate union of the two Governments which prevailed under Abdul Hamid—had this not come to an end, and perhaps for ever? And the Young Turks might be all the less inclined to favour German influence because they dreaded her expansion in Anatolia and Mesopotamia. And might it not be the policy of Turkey for the next generation to play off the different Powers, the one against the other?

Surveying, then, the whole European situation and the new constellation in the political horizon, many changes have happened of a nature to make the Germans uneasy. The Algeciras Conference was a dramatic demonstration of the changed position of Germany in Europe. To realize the change, we have only to compare an account of the Conference of 1905 with an account of the Congress of Berlin in 1878. In 1878 the European Powers received their mandate from Bismarck. At Algeciras Germany almost stood alone. Algeciras was a solemn protest of Europe against German hegemony.



Since 1905 Germany has made unceasing efforts to break the Triple Entente. At Algeciras she failed to drive a wedge between England and France. She failed even more signally in 1911, after the *coup* of Agadir. Through one of those sudden changes in the kaleidoscope of diplomacy, she seems to have been more successful with Russia at Potsdam. But the Potsdam agreement is only the temporary understanding of two reactionary Governments. It is not the *entente* of two nations. The interests of the German and of the Russian people as well as their temperaments continue to be irreconcilable, and the day is drawing near when Russia—which in 1930 will number two hundred millions of people—will block the way of German expansion in the East.

But whatever the future may hold in store for Germany, the foregoing analysis shows that the new grouping of Powers, which has reduced Germany from a position of sole supremacy to a position of equality, is not the result of any artificial combinations of diplomacy. Still less is it the result of a conspiracy, inspired by English envy and English hatred. It was not initiated by Edward the Seventh. It has survived his death. To assume that England would have been capable of isolating Germany by her own single efforts, and in order to serve her own

selfish purposes, is to attribute to England a power which she does not wield. If there has been a conspiracy, France, Italy, Russia, and the United States, inhabited by twenty million citizens who are German by birth or by descent, have all been willing accomplices. The Triple Entente has been a spontaneous revolt of Europe against German aggressiveness and German militarism.

England has not attempted to isolate Germany. She has only herself emerged from her isolation. If she can be accused of having made a grievous mistake in her foreign policy, it is that of having been blind for so long to the perils which threatened European liberty. Since 1870 she has submitted for twenty-five years to German predominance, because she had to oppose the colonial ambitions of France in Africa and the ambitions of Russia in Asia. To-day England has returned to her ancient traditions. She has never suffered for any length of time, and will never suffer as long as she remains a first-class Power, from the exclusive predominance of any one Continental nation. She has ever fought for the maintenance of the balance of power. She defended that balance against Charles the Fifth and Philip the Second in the sixteenth century, against Louis the Fourteenth in the seventeenth, against Napoleon, against Nicholas the First, and Alexander the

Second in the nineteenth century. She defends it to-day against William the Second. But she is no more the enemy of Germany to-day than she was the enemy of France or Russia ten years ago. *And if the equilibrium of Europe were threatened to-morrow by Russia, as it is threatened to-day by Germany, England would become to-morrow the ally of Germany.*

It may be contended, no doubt, that in opposing the supremacy of another empire on land, she is only defending her own supremacy on the sea. But the history of four hundred years convincingly shows that England in defending her own interests has always been fighting the battles of European liberty. And to-day more than ever, when Europe is transformed into an armed camp, when might has become the criterion of right, when all nations are living in perpetual dread of a European conflagration, the strict adherence of England to her old principle of the balance of power remains the best sanction of international law and the surest guarantee of the peace of the world.

## IS GERMAN SOCIALISM MAKING FOR PEACE?

It is becoming a commonplace to assert that the advent to power of the German Socialists will usher in a new era in the international relations of Europe. It is true that the Prussian monarchy is warlike by tradition. It is true that the Junkertum have a professional interest in war. It is true that the industrial magnates, the Krupps and the Thyssens, have a vested interest in the military industries, in the manufacture of guns and Dreadnoughts. But the power of Kaiser and Junkertum is dwindling. The army of democracy is advancing. If the rural elector did not possess ten times the voting power of the labouring masses of the big cities—if the electoral districts were divided in proportion to population—the Socialists with the Radicals would already have a large majority in the Reichstag. Even under the present iniquitous system the elections of January 1912 have given the Social Democrats a formidable accession of strength. Another

effort, another ballot, and political power will pass into the hands of the masses. Germany will have its Socialist ministers as France has its Millerand and its Briand. When that desirable consummation happens, peace will be assured. *Redeunt Saturnia regna.*

Certainly the Socialist vote has enormously increased, and with the single exception of the set-back of 1907, when the Social Democrats suffered a crushing defeat and when Prince von Bülow succeeded in forming against them a Liberal-Conservative *bloc*, the increase has been steady and automatic. And extraordinary though it seems, the increase has been inevitable, and it will cease to startle us if we remember that German industry has been born since 1870, and that every increase of the industrial population has necessarily meant a corresponding increase of Socialism. It is only since, and it is only because, Berlin has become a huge industrial metropolis that the capital of the Hohenzollern has been captured by the Socialist *Genossen*.

But there is one thing which is even more astounding than the phenomenal growth of Socialism, and that is its impotence. The very contrast between its numerical power and the paucity of its achievements reveals the inherent weakness of the party. It is admirably organized; it is characterized by splendid loyalty and discipline. The German Social Democrat



pays his subscription liberally and regularly. But he gives us once more a striking proof that neither numbers nor organization nor financial resources are the decisive factors of victory. After the Franco-German War, Bebel, intoxicated by the first triumphs of his party, prophesied that by 1896 the social and political revolution would have triumphed in Germany, and that Communism would be established. In 1912 Communism has not prevailed, and Prussian reaction is stronger than ever.

And yet the prophecy of the Socialist leader seemed justified. If in France or Italy there were one hundred Socialist deputies in Parliament, the machinery of government would cease to work, once those hundred deputies had made up their minds that it should not work. In France a party with four millions of followers would either have accomplished momentous reforms or produced a tremendous upheaval. In Germany Social Democracy has accomplished very little; it has delivered speeches innumerable; it has issued manifestoes; it has organized processions several miles in length, whenever the man with the peaked helmet chose to allow such processions. But the history of German contemporary Socialism does not count a single historical day like the Berlin days of 1848, when even Frederick the Fourth had to give way to the democratic demands. The mighty Social

Democratic Party has not achieved one big strike like the railway strike or the coal strike in England, although Prussian railwaymen or coal miners could easily have exerted pressure on the Government because the majority of Prussian railways and a large number of Prussian mines are owned by the State. The Prussian Government may put itself above the law, and it does put itself above the law ; it may violate the spirit of the Constitution and make it a dead letter ; the Kaiser may break his most solemn pledges ; but all provocation notwithstanding, the Socialist remains a law-abiding citizen, and trusts to the inevitable agency of natural laws and to the working of economic evolution.

It will be objected that important Socialist measures have been passed by the German Reichstag, and that the German Government may claim the merit and credit of having set an example in social legislation to all other civilized countries. By all means let due honour be given to German statesmen for initiating their insurance legislation ; but, as we already pointed out, those laws were passed by Bismarck long before Socialism existed as a party. And they were passed largely on the principle that "prevention is better than cure," and because the Government were still afraid of the phantom of Socialism. To-day the Prussian Government have ceased to be afraid. Socialism has be-

come a reality, its supporters are counted by millions, and nothing is changed in the kingdom of Prussia.

In explanation of the impotence of German Socialism it may be urged that in any insurrection against a tyrannical government the Socialists would run a terrible risk—that they would have the majority of the army against them. And there is a great deal of truth in that explanation. It is one of many false notions current about our Continental neighbours that the German army is essentially a national army, a citizen army, a universal service army. As a matter of fact, hundreds of thousands of German youths are not called upon to serve, and that not for financial reasons but for political reasons. They are not called upon to serve because the Government have not sufficient confidence in their loyalty. The majority of the military contingent ought to come from the cities, which represent the majority of the population. As a matter of fact, the majority come from the country, which represents the minority of the population. The Government prefers to rely on the loyalty of the rural recruits, even as the Russian Government in an emergency prefers to rely on the Cossacks.

But the main reason why German Socialism does not possess the dynamic power which it possesses in England and France does not lie in

the Government. Rather does it lie in the nature of the Socialist doctrine and in the temperament of the German people. Why should the German Social Democrat make a sacrifice for his ideal or make a resolute stand against despotism, when the Marxist doctrine tells him that the new era will come automatically, mechanically, and that all the forces of the times are working for him? And how can we expect the German artisan to rebel when centuries of oppression have inured him to passive obedience? In this connection we ought to remember once more that German Social Democracy is organized exactly on the same military and despotic principle as the German Government. King Bebel demands as implicit obedience as Kaiser William. Iron discipline and unquestioning submission are perhaps greater in the army of labour than in the army of reaction.

And not only is German Socialism not as strong; neither is it as pacifist as is generally supposed. Outsiders take it for granted that in the event of a conflict between France and Germany there would be solidarity between the French and the German artisans. They assume that Socialism is essentially international. And in theory such an assumption is quite legitimate. But many things in Germany are national which elsewhere are universal. And

in Germany Socialism is becoming national, as German political economy is national, as German science is national, as German religion is national. Therefore the political axiom that German Socialists would necessarily come to an understanding with their French and English brethren has been falsified by the event. German Socialists have, no doubt, shown their pacific intentions; they have issued pacific manifestoes and organized pacific processions; they have filed off in their hundreds of thousands in the streets of Berlin to protest against the war party; but when the question of peace or war has been brought to a point in Socialist congresses—when their foreign brethren have moved that in the case of an unjust aggression the German Social Democrats should declare a military strike—German Socialists have refused to assent. The dramatic oratorical duel which took place between the French and the German delegates at the Congress of Stuttgart illustrates the differences between the national temperament of the Frenchman and the German. When called upon to proclaim the military strike, the German Socialists gave as an excuse that such a decision would frighten away from the Social Democrat Party hundreds of thousands of middle-class supporters. This excuse is an additional proof of the moral and political weakness of Social



Democracy. It illustrates its moral weakness; for the Socialist leaders sacrifice a great principle for the sake of an electoral gain. The leaders know that nationalist feeling runs high in the middle classes; they know that any anti-militarist policy would be unpopular. And they have not the courage as a party to face unpopularity. And the arguments used at Stuttgart also illustrate the political weakness of German Socialism; for they show that the Socialist vote does not possess the cohesion and homogeneity with which it is credited: they show that hundreds of thousands of citizens who record a Socialist vote are not Socialists at all. To vote for Socialism is merely an indirect way of voting against the Government. There is no organized Opposition in Germany. The Socialists are the only party who are "agin the Government." And all those German citizens who are dissatisfied with conditions as they are, choose this indirect and clumsy method of voting for the Socialists in order to express their dissatisfaction with the present Prussian despotism.

It is therefore not true to say that Socialism in Germany is a decisive force working for peace. It would be more true to say that it is a force working for war, simply because it is a force working for reaction. Prussian reaction would not be so strong if it were not for the bugbear of Social Democracy. If Social

Democracy attracts a considerable section of the lower middle class, it repels and frightens the bulk of the middle classes as well as of the upper classes. Many Liberals who would otherwise oppose the Government, support it from horror of the red flag, and they strengthen unwillingly the power of reaction. And therefore it would scarcely be a paradox to say that the nearer the approach of the Socialistic reign, the greater would be the danger to international peace. German contemporary history illustrates once more a general law of history, that the dread of a civil war is often a direct cause of a foreign war, and that the ruling classes are driven to seek outside a diversion from internal difficulties. Thus political unrest ushered in the wars of the Revolution and the Empire; thus the internal difficulties of Napoleon the Third brought about the Franco-German War; thus the internal upheaval of Russia in our days produced the Russo-Japanese War.

It may be true that power is slipping away from the hands of the Prussian Junkertum and the bureaucracy, although Prussian reaction is far stronger than most foreign critics realize. But whether it be strong or weak, one thing is certain: a power which has been supreme for two centuries will not surrender without a struggle. The Prussian Junkers may be politically stupid, but they

have not lost the fighting spirit, and they will not give way to the "mob." Before Prussian reaction capitulates, it will play its last card and seek salvation in a European conflagration.

## THE GERMAN KAISER.

To write a book on German politics which would ignore the German Kaiser would be like playing Hamlet whilst leaving out the character of the Danish prince. For the Kaiser meets us at every turn. In the words of Victor Hugo, speaking of Napoleon : "*Toujours lui, lui partout.*" It may be found on close examination that his influence on the political drama is far less decisive than appears at first sight, even as in Shakespeare's masterpiece Hamlet has little influence on the actual development of the plot. It may be that the Kaiser's part is more spectacular than dramatic. But whether we like him, whether we believe in him or not, we cannot avoid his august presence.

And even if his absorbing personality did not force itself upon our attention, its study would still present to us a most fascinating problem. For the Kaiser is essentially complex and perplexing, elusive and stimulating, explosive and incalculable. With him it is the unexpected that always happens. He is a bundle of contra-

dictions. He is the war lord of Europe ; yet he has been nicknamed by the German war party, "William the Peaceful." He is a German of the Germans ; yet he professes to be the friend of England. He is intensely religious, and claims to be the Anointed of the Lord ; yet in many respects he is a materialist, mainly trusting in brute force. He is picturesquely mediæval, and the Hohenzollern seems to be ever anxious to model himself on the Hohenstaufen ; yet he is pre-eminently modern. He shocks us as offensively theatrical ; yet he is unmistakably sincere.

Any one who attempts to write on the German Emperor must solve those glaring contradictions. And he will only succeed in doing so if he carefully dissociates the various elements which have entered into his composition. He will only succeed if he separates what the Kaiser owes to his ancestry, and what he owes to his education ; what he owes to his inmost personality ; what he owes to his immediate surroundings and to the age he lives in. It is for want of making those necessary distinctions that so many publicists who have given us biographies and character sketches of the Kaiser have failed to reveal him.

And after all, when every fact has been conscientiously sifted and analyzed, even the most careful student cannot be sure of having hit the



Imperial likeness. It seems as if the Kaiser each time he sits for his portrait not merely dons a different uniform, but puts on a different moral physiognomy. On three occasions I have made an attempt to draw a pen portrait of Emperor William, and each sketch was different from the other; each subsequent judgment contradicted my previous estimate. I do not, therefore, pretend in the present instance to give a final definition of the German autocrat, for the simple reason that it is not possible to give a final definition. It must be left to the reader to exert his own judgment and to compare my estimate of Emperor William with the estimate of those who have written before us.

## I.

### *The Hohenzollern Influence.*

First in importance is the Hohenzollern influence.

Few royal families in history possess a more marked individuality. Each member of the dynasty may differ widely from his predecessor or successor. The cynical man of genius, Frederick the Great, is not like the feeble voluptuary, Frederick William the Third, who again is very unlike the romantic and mystical

dreamer, Frederick the Fourth. And yet as rulers they all have a certain common type. They have created a definite European State, and they themselves have been moulded by that State.

1. Considering the enormous part they have played in history, and how closely the Hohenzollerns have been identified with the fortunes of Prussia, it is natural that their first characteristic should be an overweening dynastic pride. No Bourbon or Habsburg has ever believed more firmly in his Divine Right to govern or misgovern his people. A Hohenzollern may condescend to employ men of genius to assist him in his providential task, but he will only consider those men of genius as tools to work out his own ends, and he will discard those tools whenever they have served their purpose, or whenever they have ceased to be pliable instruments.

William possesses in the highest degree the pride of his race. Every tourist can judge from one of the most interesting and most impressive monuments of Berlin, the *Sieges Allee*, what is William's practical conception of German history. In that symbolical avenue all the glories of the past have been enlisted as liegemen of the Hohenzollern. The most petty Prussian marriage assumes colossal proportions, whilst giants like Luther and Kant only appear to the right

and to the left as the humble servants and *Handlanger* of their princes. We may smile at such a travesty of German history and at the glorification of royal nonentities, and we may be justified in thinking that the statues of the *Sieges Allee* have no more historical reality than the mythical portraits of the kings of Scotland in Holyrood Palace. And German writers may be right in ridiculing the Kaiser for this debauch of statuary. Personally I do not agree with those writers. I am convinced that the conception of the *Sieges Allee*, which entirely belongs to the Kaiser, is by far the cleverest thing which he has ever done, and also the most political. The national history which the statues inculcate may be fictitious, but the Kaiser knew that this fictitious history is the only one which millions of Germans would be ever likely to get, and the only one that would seize hold of their imagination.

And the same historical lesson which William has taught through his statues he is trying to teach through his speeches. The exaltation of the Hohenzollern is their one *Leitmotiv*, and especially the exaltation of his immediate predecessors, and, above all, of William "the Great," of William "the Saint." Every schoolboy knows that William was an honest, conscientious, well-meaning ruler, and not devoid of judgment, whose great merit was to efface himself before

his Chancellor, and to give way to Bismarck's policy even when he did not approve of it. Every schoolboy knows that William's relation to Bismarck was very much that of Louis the Thirteenth to Richelieu. But here again the Kaiser has changed our interpretation of history. To him the real creator of the new empire is neither Bismarck nor Moltke nor Roon. William the Second, indeed, may graciously condescend to speak of his grandfather's "Paladins" as we speak of the Knights of the Round Table, or of the Twelve Peers of Charlemagne, but they are only mentioned collectively and anonymously, and it is significant that for many years the name of Bismarck has been taboo in the Kaiser's orations.

And in the light of this fact, and of the Kaiser's conception of what ought to be the relation between a ruler and his ministers, we understand why Bismarck was brutally dismissed. It is now generally admitted that the dismissal of the Iron Chancellor was the first great political blunder of the Emperor. Even Louis the Fourteenth waited for the death of Mazarin, and dared not dismiss him. And Mazarin was not Bismarck. Certainly it would have been an invaluable education to William if he could have availed himself for a few years of his Chancellor's experience and statesmanship. But it is also believed that the dismissal was inevitable, because

two such strong temperaments could not have worked together. We do not think that this is the true explanation of the catastrophe; we do not think that it was pre-eminently a case of one strong will pitted against another. Rather would we infer from what has been said before, that the dismissal was largely an illustration of that dynastic pride and jealousy to which we have just referred. William's objection to Bismarck was not his Chancellor's masterful temper—it was mainly that the servant was eclipsing the glory of the dynasty in the eyes of the people. It was urgently necessary that the servant should render unto Cæsar what belonged to Cæsar, that he should be put in his proper place, that the German people should realize from a dramatic illustration that even the greatest statesman is nothing except through the favour of his prince, and that the Hohenzollern should once more control the destinies of the State.

2. Even as their dynastic pride, so is the absolutism of the Hohenzollern bred in the bone, and transmitted with the traditions of Prussian history. A Hohenzollern impatiently submits to constitutional checks. Most of the political difficulties and anomalies referred to in previous chapters are due to this one cause. Bismarck, in order to win over all the nations of the empire to Prussian hegemony, made an



appeal to popular opinion, used universal suffrage as a lever to break down dynastic and particularist opinion in the service of the absolute monarchy of the Hohenzollern. But universal suffrage, once it had served its purpose as a plebiscite, was made innocuous, and became a mockery. The absolute monarchy alone remained a reality.

All the Hohenzollern rulers have shown the same absolutist instinct; but Frederick the Great is perhaps a better illustration of this despotic temper than any other Prussian king. His despotism may have been abler and more enlightened, but still it was despotism. Every one of his acts, public and private, illustrates his despotic temper. Take his relations to Voltaire. Frederick the Great felt a boundless admiration for Voltaire; he was imbued with Voltaire's spirit from early youth, and a correspondence of forty years, which was only terminated by death, proves how complete was the intellectual sympathy which united the two men; the king induced the poet by every promise and flattery to leave his country and to make his residence at Potsdam: yet when Voltaire dared to indulge the irrepressible freedom of his genius and to criticize one of the favourites of his master, the friendship was brought to an immediate rupture, and the king treated with the most revolting indignity the very man

whom he himself called the greatest genius of his age.

Or take Frederick's relations to his mistresses. Frederick had more complete control over his feelings than most rulers, and certainly few kings have been less addicted to the tender passion; yet when he deigned to confer his favour on an Italian ballet-girl he was more unscrupulous than any Bourbon, as tyrannical as an Oriental potentate in the satisfaction of his desire. In vain did the Barberini claim the protection of her husband, a Scottish nobleman; in vain did she seek shelter in the Republic of Venice: Frederick compelled the Doge and Senate to surrender the object of his passion. The husband and wife were separated, and the lady was brought under military escort to the Palace of Sans Souci.

William the Second possesses in its integrity the despotic temper of his ancestors. From the beginning of his reign he has shown himself impervious to criticism: "I go my way; it is the only right one"—"Whoever shall prove an obstacle to the realization of my purpose, I shall shatter"—*den zerschmetterte ich*.

Under the difficult conditions of a modern German Government a wise ruler would have welcomed free speech, both as a safety valve for popular discontent and as an indication of popular feeling; but William deprecates free speech

and ignores it. Merely to discuss his policy is to be branded as a *nörgler*. If he could, he would prosecute his critics. They would be condemned for *lèse-majesté*, as poor Professor Geffcken was sent to prison by Bismarck merely for having criticized the policy of the omnipotent Chancellor.

One might have expected that the amazing indiscretions of the *Daily Telegraph* interview and the hurricane which they roused would have sobered for ever the Imperial orator. For the hurricane seemed to shake the throne to its foundations: even the Conservative leaders seemed to give up the Emperor. Under the pressure of public opinion, and on the advice of his Chancellor, William was prevailed upon to make a statement to the effect that in future he would be more reserved in the expression of his opinions. But as if to prove how light he made of that promise, whilst the political tempest was raging in the Reichstag, the Emperor went off to the Bavarian highlands on a shooting-party and a round of amusements and *cafés-chantant*, and spent one of the busiest and one of the gayest holidays of his reign. After a few months the Königsberg speech asserted more emphatically than ever his belief in absolutism, and in his Divine Right to rule his subjects without the interference or the control of a refractory Parliament.

3. There are many different forms of absolute government. It may be tyrannical and force itself upon an unwilling people, or it may be acceptable to the people, like the rule of the Russian Czar, the "little father" of one hundred and fifty million moujiks. Again, it may be obscurantist, or it may be enlightened. It may be direct and personal, or it may be indirect and delegated. The absolutism of most wise rulers is of the latter kind. Even thus William the First chose to exert his authority through trusty advisers. William the Second, although never tired of extolling his grandfather, does not imitate him in this respect; rather does he prefer to imitate Frederick William the Fourth. And, like Frederick William the Fourth, he may eventually come to grief, if his reign lasts long enough for the consequences of his policy to mature. The Kaiser is convinced that any delegation of his power would amount to a surrender and limitation. He therefore insists on discharging his Imperial office directly—"*L'état c'est moi!*" Since Napoleon the First and Nicholas the First of Russia the world has not seen another example of a personal régime so consistent, so continuous, extending over the most minute details of government.

It is needless to say that with such a despotic temperament William the Second is not likely to draw on the highest political capacity of the

State. No statesman with a strong personality could submit to serving under such a master. William, therefore, is necessarily dependent on mediocrities, on favourites, for the first quality requisite is a supple and pliable character. He may have had able courtiers to assist him, but he has had few independent advisers. Count von Caprivi, the successor of Bismarck, was a soldier, accustomed to obedience ; Prince von Hohenlohe was a broken old man of eighty : both were overthrown by the occult influence of the *Camarilla* and Round Table of Liebenberg. In Hohenlohe's successor the Kaiser was singularly fortunate, for the fourth Chancellor, Prince von Bülow, if he was not a strong man, was at least a man of extraordinary gifts, a virtuoso of diplomacy, who understood both the Kaiser and the people, and who for ten years maintained himself in unstable equipoise with the dexterity of a rope-dancer. Since Bülow was swept away in the tempest which followed the *Daily Telegraph* interview, William the Second has availed himself of the services of a respectable bureaucrat who can be trusted to obey. The fifth Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg, is still an unknown quantity, but he will certainly neither eclipse his Imperial master nor overrule his will ; and he has already proclaimed in the Reichstag that he does not believe in anything so absurd as parliamentary govern-



ment for the German Empire even in the most remote future.

4. As a general rule, even as nations have the government they deserve, so dynasties in the long run deserve the influence they have. And it must be admitted in fairness to the Hohenzollerns that the predominant position they have achieved and the loyalty they evoke are partly justified by the services they have rendered to the Prussian State. The Hohenzollern monarchs have been traditionally distinguished by a high sense of duty. The motto of Frederick the Great, "*Ich Dien*," is characteristic of that tradition, and the definition of the Prussian king as "the first servant of the State" has become a household word wherever the German language is spoken.

William the Second has inherited the high sense of duty of his ancestors. He is fully alive to the formidable responsibility entailed by his exalted office. As nothing must happen in Europe without the consent of Germany, so nothing must happen in Germany without the knowledge of the Kaiser. He is a strenuous worker, omnipresent, omniscient. Whether his work is always profitable is another question which the reader will have to settle for himself after reading the present chapter.

5. We have already pointed out in a previous chapter that the Hohenzollerns are



upstart princelings. They are the *parvenus* and *arrivistes* amongst royal dynasties. Notwithstanding the mythical history and the fantastical statuary of the *Sieges Allee*, they are but of yesterday compared to the Bourbons or Habsburgs. Their phenomenal ascent from an obscure margraviate to Imperial power was accomplished in half a dozen generations. This extraordinary success must be largely attributed to their practical qualities of common-sense and judgment, which their very obscurity and poverty made a necessity. With the exception of one or two episodes displaying the heroic fortitude of Frederick the Great and of Queen Louise, after a crushing defeat, there is little which is tragic or romantic, or even picturesque, about the Hohenzollern family. They are all *Realpolitiker*, and they have pushed their fortunes by the same processes by which a clerk or artisan works his way upwards to become a manager or captain of industry; and Samuel Smiles, the author of "Self-Help," could have chosen no better illustration to point his utilitarian and bourgeois morality.

In this respect, again, William the Second, with all his spurious mysticism, is a true Hohenzollern. He is also a realist, with an eye to the main chance, and he has never been embarrassed in the pursuance of his policy by any cumbersome chivalrous scruples. He appreciates every man

and every idea according as that man or that idea may be made subservient to his policy. Even moral and spiritual forces, like art, literature, and religion, must be utilized for dynastic purposes. Art must be patriotic—that is to say, it must glorify the royal house ; education must train good Prussians and good soldiers ; religion must preach submission and loyalty to the prince.

And because he is a realist, he is also an opportunist. He seems to change sides as easily as he changes his uniforms, according as occasion or necessity directs. And his meandering and tortuous statesmanship is all the more striking because he is so entirely unconscious of it. We see him in turn encouraging Kruger in his resistance to England at a time when resistance seemed likely to succeed ; and after the lapse of a few years, we see him almost brutally refusing to receive the ex-President in the hour of disaster, as if he could have ingratiated himself with the British public by such mean conduct towards a broken and suppliant old man. We see him at one and the same time a pious pilgrim and crusader, and the intimate friend of Abdul Hamid, the butcher of Christian nationalities. It never seemed to occur to him that the way to Jerusalem does not pass through Constantinople, and that the same ruler cannot be the self-appointed protector

of the unspeakable Turk and the protector of the Holy Sepulchre.

6. There remains to point out in connection with the Kaiser's political characteristics the most important trait of the Prussian dynasty, which we have emphasized in a previous chapter. We saw that the Hohenzollern is by tradition and education a militarist. It is the army which has made both the nation and its rulers. Other German princes might try to gain consequence whilst achieving bankruptcy, by appearing as patrons of art and literature, by mimicking the splendour of Versailles. But the Prussian dukes first rose into political significance by making it worth while for other princes to seek their military support. They invested all their available resources in armies and armaments, and no investment ever proved more remunerative. To the Great Elector, to the Sergeant-King, to Frederick the Great, the army was the first concern of the State, and the military expenditure was out of all proportion to the resources of the people. It kept the subjects groaning under the burden of taxation, it arrested for generations the economic development of the country, but it amply repaid the rulers.

The Prussian army has suffered no diminution under William the Second. It remains the first pillar of the throne and the first concern of the

prince. In hours of doubt and suspicion, when a disloyal Opposition asserts itself in the Reichstag, William delights in escaping to Pomerania and to the eastern marches, to be strengthened by the devotion and allegiance of his Junkers. He knows that if it came to a conflict between King and Parliament he would find tens of thousands amongst his *Ost-Elbier* who would rally round the throne, and who would act on the policy of the energetic Herr von Oldenburg and disperse an unruly assembly at the point of the bayonet. And if the orators of the Opposition were to become too unpleasantly noisy and critical, the Emperor would emphatically remind them that Prussia and the German Empire were not created by eloquent speeches, but by the heroism of German soldiers.

## II.

### *The Personal Idiosyncrasies of the Kaiser.*

We have tried to set out in full relief the impress of the Hohenzollern tradition and heredity. But it would be to convey an entirely wrong idea of the Kaiser to represent him as a mere replica of a general type. Whether he is a strong man or not, it will be for the reader to judge. One thing is certain, that he is a

personality, that he has a decided originality, and that his individual idiosyncrasies are so striking that they sometimes almost seem to obliterate the family likeness.

1. The first trait we associate with the Kaiser is that of an impulsive and irrepressible sovereign. He is rash, spirited, and impatient of control. This trait is partly the result of his temperament. It is the result of his virtues as much as of his defects. It is the result of the sincerity and spontaneity of his disposition. But it is also the outcome of circumstances. In consequence of the tragic death of his father he was unexpectedly called to the throne in early youth. He was not compelled to serve a long apprenticeship as heir-apparent, like his father or his grandfather, or like his uncle, Edward the Seventh. Nor was he compelled, like Frederick the Great, to disguise his inmost feelings. He was free to indulge to the full the tendencies of his nature at an age when passions are strongest, and he had not sat on the throne for two years when his dismissal of Bismarck removed the last obstacle to his imperious will.

2. The impulsiveness of the Kaiser expresses itself equally in his words and in his deeds, in his indiscretions and in his tactlessness. The distinction between his words and his deeds is perhaps more formal than real, because every



word of the Emperor is equivalent to a deed. The most insignificant of his utterances may bind or compromise the nation in whose name he speaks. It is unnecessary to point out that the indiscretions of William have been innumerable. He is the irresponsible talker and speech-maker on the throne. There has hardly been a crisis in contemporary German history which cannot be traced to one of the "winged words" of William, and their consequences have often been incalculable. They partly explain the failure of German foreign policy; they explain how in recent years, with every trump card in her hand, Germany has on the whole achieved few substantial results.

3. The Kaiser has a restless temperament. He seems to be perpetual motion incarnate, and his restlessness at times almost assumes a morbid character, and has often been connected with the hereditary nervous complaint from which the Kaiser suffers. One of his earliest critics, Professor Quidde, in the famous "Caligula" pamphlet, of which five hundred thousand copies were circulated in a few weeks, drew a parallel between William and the degenerate Roman Emperor, and emphasized the pathological nature of his case.

Certainly the travelling habit in William the Second amounts to a mania. No European sovereign is so constantly on the move by



sea and by land. Whilst William the First has been defined the "*Greise Kaiser*," whilst Frederick the Third has been called the "*Weise Kaiser*," William the Second has been nicknamed the "*Reise Kaiser*." His perpetual displacements may be partly explained by his keen intellectual curiosity and his genuine love of the sea, but they are mainly the result of a constitutional disposition. They certainly are not justified by political necessity. Political reasons may explain some of his journeys, but more frequently political necessity would urgently demand his remaining in the capital. Considering how much Germany is a centralized government, and how much depends on the personal presence of his Majesty, it is not easy to imagine how the policy of the German Empire can have been directed for twenty-five years by an absentee ruler, issuing his commands from the North Cape or the Mediterranean or the Adriatic.

4. The Kaiser's restlessness is not only physical but it is also mental, and one of the forms which it takes is his abnormal versatility. As he is unable to remain in the same spot for two days on end, so he is unable to concentrate on the same topic. He changes his interests from day to day. He claims universal competency. His authority is not confined to the sphere of government, to matters of the

army or navy or foreign policy. Every problem, human and divine, comes within his ken. He is an architect and an artist, and has drawn the famous cartoons illustrating the Yellow peril. He has given his support to, or withheld it from, various schools of painting or literature. He has assisted Direktor Bode in deciding which works of art are genuine and which spurious. He has appeared as a Biblical critic, and has lectured Professor Delitsch on the Bible-Babel controversy. He has pronounced his verdict in the great battle between classical and modern languages, and he has declared in favour of a modern education. He has appeared as an authority on aeronautics, and has proclaimed Count Zeppelin the greatest German of the century.

5. In the sphere of politics the Kaiser's versatility has brought in its train political instability. His changeableness is not that of the realist and opportunist who adapts himself to circumstances; rather is it that of the despot who follows the inspiration of the moment. No ruler has so often altered his opinions on persons and events. Again and again he has withdrawn his favour from statesmen or advisers who hitherto had enjoyed his absolute confidence. When a man has served his purpose he discards him. And as he is constantly changing his personal interest in

men, so he is constantly shifting his political point of view. He has been in turn Anglophile and Francophile, Turcophile and Russophile. He has no guiding principles in foreign policy, and he has imparted to German diplomacy that incoherence which has been its main weakness in the last generation.

6. It is extraordinary that after all the mistakes he has made, and all the disappointments he has suffered, he should not have been sobered by events, and that his checkered reign should not have made him into a cynic and a sceptic. But the Kaiser remains an optimist. He hates and despises pessimists. He has enthusiasms rather than enthusiasm. He is always speaking in superlatives; and he continues to be brimful of youth. He makes us forget that he has ruled the empire for a quarter of a century. We still think of this father and grandfather of a patriarchal family, sufficiently numerous to fill all the thrones of Europe, as if he were a young man. And, in fact, he still possesses all his early juvenile exuberance.

7. His optimism may be due to his superabundant vitality, but it is due even more to his healthy and superb egotism, to his unshaken belief in himself. He has no misgivings; he is not addicted to introspective moods. He is not like the Danish prince, "sicklied o'er

with the pale cast of thought." Even though the whole of Germany were of one opinion, once William has made up his mind he would continue to think that he was right ; always reserving to himself the privilege of changing the right opinion of to-day into the wrong opinion of to-morrow. He is not in the least likely to commit suicide, as Frederick the Great threatened to do after a severe defeat. Nor is he likely to abdicate, as William the First threatened to again and again. When Maximilian Harden demanded his abdication, after the *Daily Telegraph* crisis in 1908, the famous journalist only proved how little he understood either the temper of the Kaiser or that of his people.

8. The Kaiser's egotism, which might have been dangerous to himself and might have induced the fate of Louis the Second of Bavaria, is tempered by his delightful vanity. All those who have approached him agree that it is *vanity* rather than *pride* which characterizes the Kaiser. Vanity may be the characteristic of a weak man, yet to a ruler like William the Second vanity is rather a source of strength than a cause of weakness. For the proud man is satisfied with his own approval. Pride would have isolated William on the pinnacle of power. The vain man depends on the applause of others. The Kaiser's vanity has brought him nearer to his

subjects, has made him more human and more sociable.

But there is one evil consequence of the Kaiser's unbounded vanity—namely, that it places him at the mercy of unscrupulous flatterers. All despots are exposed to that danger, but strong characters and enlightened rulers, like Frederick the Second, realizing the danger, deliberately invite criticism, and surround themselves with able advisers. William the Second has generally been surrounded with courtiers and sycophants. Bülow stated at the time of the Harden-Moltke trial that a "*camarilla* in Germany was unthinkable, that it was a poisonous exotic growth which could never thrive on German soil." Impartial students of contemporary German history know that it has thriven only too luxuriantly. All the Kaiser's independent biographers agree in emphasizing the fact that flatterers alone have a chance at the Court of Berlin, and that as nobody dares criticize the Kaiser's opinions, and as everybody is compelled to indulge his whims and prejudices, the field is left clear for courtiers of the Eulenburg and Waldersee type.

9. The boundless egotism combined with the despotic temper, the vanity of a comparatively weak and amiable and sociable sovereign depending on applause, have been indulged for so many years that in the course of time they have



degenerated into megalomania. In a Wittelsbach prince such megalomania would have led to madness. In the Hohenzollern it has only resulted in extravagance. That extravagance expresses itself in a thousand ways, especially in such striking manifestations as his fifty residences or his three hundred uniforms. It is characteristic of the Kaiser's total absence of humour that with his extravagant habits he is constantly preaching the simple life. It would have been well for him if he had practised a little more what he preaches, and if he had followed a little more the example of his ancestor, Frederick the Great, for he would have escaped the financial worries which have been his lot from the beginning of his reign. The Kaiser ought to be the richest man in his empire—his civil list has been repeatedly increased—yet William finds himself in an almost chronic state of bankruptcy, and his close relations with American millionaires and Jewish financiers have not sufficed to relieve him of his anxieties.

10. The Kaiser's megalomania also explains the theatrical aspects of his personality. All sovereigns love to surround themselves with the pomp and circumstance of the throne. Without it half of their prestige would vanish, and only giants like Frederick the Second or Napoleon could afford simplicity of dress and



manner. But there is in the Kaiser something more than the ordinary love of splendour. There is something almost histrionic and Neronian in his composition—*qualis artifex!* The Kaiser loves to astonish, to dazzle his subjects. His appearances and his poses are those of an Imperial actor, and are always studiously calculated to produce a sensation. Hence his surprise visits, his startling appearances in regimental barracks in the dead of night or in the early morning; hence his Eastern journeys; hence, especially, the extraordinary importance he attaches to the ritual of dress and uniform. William the Second is obviously a believer in the clothes philosophy of Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus." No man will understand the Kaiser who does not attach as much importance to this side of his character as he does himself. It has been said that the Kaiser has such a nice perception of the fitness of things in this matter that when he visits an aquarium he thinks it necessary to put on the uniform of an admiral, and that when he eats an English plum pudding he thinks it necessary to don the uniform of the Dragoon Guards. Certainly the three hundred uniforms of Kaiser William will become as legendary in German history as the simple threadbare coat of Frederick the Great.

11. The love of the sensational and the

theatrical also explains the so-called romanticism of William. Although he has often been compared to Lohengrin, his is by no means the romanticism of Wagner. He makes no appeal to the emotions or to the imagination, but only appeals to the senses. He may not be impervious to certain aspects of poetry : some of his utterances, like the speech on Drake and the Pacific, are distinctly poetical. But as a rule William's romanticism is mainly a certain *Sinn für das Äussere*—a love for external splendour.

The same superficial romanticism explains his love of the past. It is not the outcome of any settled principles, of any theoretical mediævalism; it is not the love of the good old times, when a prince could act as he pleased. William finds himself perfectly at home in the present times, and he probably realizes that a German emperor to-day has more power than he would have had in the Middle Ages ; for in the Middle Ages he would have had to divide his power with the Pope, and he would have found his abbots and prelates less pliable than his Excellency Professor von Harnack or the Most Reverend Dr. Dryander. Still, the Middle Ages with their burgraves and margraves are decidedly more picturesque than our commonplace latter days. And the Kaiser loves to think that the Hohenzollern is the lineal successor of the

Hohenstaufen and of the Holy Roman Empire of Charlemagne.

12. "Tell me what a man believes, and I shall tell you what he is," is an often quoted saying of Carlyle. We may safely apply this criterion to the psychology of the Kaiser. For his religion is part of his personality, and, like his personality, it has often been misunderstood. We are continuously told that he is a Christian mystic. But, indeed, there is in his disposition little of the Christian and still less of the mystic. It is true that he delights in preaching sermons because he has a natural gift of speech, but he delights in preaching just as he delights in yachting, drawing, and painting. He has none of the *Innerlichkeit*, none of the sense of mystery, which characterizes the genuine mystic. And he has as little of the humility and of the sense of sin which characterizes the genuine Christian. The Kaiser's Christianity is essentially political; it is that of most despots who have used religion for political purposes. Christianity is useful to fight the enemies of the empire, and in these days of social unrest the altar is the necessary prop of the throne.

"I believe that to bind all our fellow-citizens, all our classes together, there is only one means, and that is *Religion*—not, indeed, religion understood in a narrow, ecclesiastical, and dogmatic sense, but in a wider, more practical sense, with relation to life." (August 31, 1907.)

"I expect from you all that you will all help me, priests and laymen, to maintain religion in the people. Whoever does not establish his life on the foundation of religion is lost, and therefore I will pledge myself to-day to place my whole empire, my people, my army, symbolically represented through this staff of command, myself and my family, *under the Cross and its protection.*" (June 19, 1902.)

His religion is a religion of authority. It is political and social. Religion, indeed, is the sanction of all political authority and citizenship.

"Nobody can be a good soldier if he is not at the same time a good Christian. The recruits who have given the oath of allegiance to myself, as to their earthly lord, must above all preserve their allegiance to their heavenly Lord and Saviour. As the crown is nothing without the altar and the crucifix, so the army is nothing without the Christian religion." (November 1896.)

The title of Bossuet's famous treatise, "Politics based on Holy Scripture," might sum up the Emperor's political creed. Politics must be based on religion; they are bound up with it. The Kaiser believes in an ever-present Providence, and he believes that Providence has chosen the German people as His people, and has chosen the Hohenzollern as His rulers. He has never doubted that he is the vicegerent appointed by God Almighty to carry out His will. Never did mediæval

Pope believe more absolutely in his divine mission :—

“ . . . in a kingdom by the grace of God, with its responsibility to the Creator above, from which no man, no minister, no parliament can absolve the sovereign.” (August 1897.)

“I see in the people and in the country that I have inherited a talent entrusted to me by God, which it is my duty to increase.” (March 1890.)

“In our house we consider ourselves as . . . appointed by God to direct and to lead the nations over which it has been given us to rule to a higher state of well-being, to the improvement of their material and spiritual interests.” (April 1890.)

“You know that I consider my whole office and duty as imposed on me by Heaven, and that I have been called in the service of the Highest, to whom I shall have to render one day an account of my trust.” (February 1891.)

The best proof that the Kaiser's religion is mainly political is that in matters of religion his tolerance verges on laxity. In matters political—that is to say, in matters where men generally are tolerant—he is narrow and intolerant. On the contrary, in matters religious, where a deeply religious mind is almost inevitably narrow, the Kaiser is marvellously broad-minded. *Ex officio* he is a Lutheran ; he is the defender of the Lutheran faith. At the same

time his sympathies are Catholic, and he has never missed an opportunity of expressing his admiration for a religion which stands for authority and discipline. He also combines a profound sympathy for Mohammedanism. Being thus equally and impartially sympathetic to Lutheranism, Catholicism, and Mohammedanism, like a very Nathan the Wise, or like a modern indifferent sceptic, he only happens to be intolerant of the one form of Christianity which does not favour his despotic policy. In the famous speech against Stöcker he expresses his abhorrence for democratic Christianity and Christian Socialism. Yet who can doubt that Christian Socialism is one of the most genuine forms of Christianity, and that Pastor Stöcker, whom William so fiercely denounces, is on the whole a more fervid Christian than the official court chaplains of his Majesty?

### III.

#### *William the Second and the Tendencies of the Age.*

We have said enough to convince the reader that the Kaiser is an extraordinarily interesting and complex personality, and that even had he been born a private man he would certainly not have been lost in the crowd. But however



much he may appeal to our curiosity as an individual, even more interesting to us is the practical question : What is the Kaiser's relation to his people and to his age ?

Certain characteristics of his seem to be emphatically in opposition to the age we live in, and in many respects the Kaiser strikes us as a living anachronism. And this fact might explain the frequent opposition he has roused. If that be so, the problem arises : Does this opposition express the substance of his character, and will that opposition not gather strength as the German people more fully realize how entirely their government is out of date and ill-adapted to the requirements of the times ? And is the Kaiser indeed against the times ? Is he, if I may use the expression of Nietzsche, "*Unzeitgemaess*" ? Is the Kaiser the strong man of Ibsen, who dares to stand alone, and, like a Titan, resists the onslaught of democracy ?

If we were to believe the Kaiser's own interpretation of himself we would have to answer in the affirmative. Again and again he has thrown out a challenge to German democracy. "I follow my own course, it is the right one"—"There is only one who is master in the empire, and that is I ; I shall brook no other" (May 1891)—are the burden of many a speech. But if our diagnosis of the Kaiser's characteristics

is correct, and if our analysis of the political situation is accurate, such an interpretation would be entirely misleading. The Kaiser is not the Titan who stands in solitary grandeur and who waits until the tide of democracy overwhelms him. He lacks the essentials of the strong man. The strong man is characterized by self-restraint, and we have seen that the Emperor remains incurably impulsive. A strong man is characterized by calmness and repose, and the Emperor is always agitated. A strong man is characterized by wisdom, and the Emperor is again and again carried away by his passions. A strong man is reticent, and the German Emperor is indiscreet and tactless. On the other hand, it is not true that he stands alone. He only leads when he is sure to have a large following. And when it is necessary he is himself content to follow. He is pliable and impressionable and sensitive to every passing mood of public opinion, and he has an almost morbid craving for applause and popularity.

So far from being a mediæval Holy Roman Emperor he is the most modern of rulers. He is possessed with the ambition of his people and the aspirations of his age, and his political wisdom is directed not towards the past but towards the future.

I. In the first place he incarnates the Im-

perialistic materialism of the latter-day German. This sovereign so often described as mediæval is almost American in his tastes and sympathies. He delights in receiving African and Yankee millionaires like Cecil Rhodes and Mr. Pierpont Morgan. He delights in associating with captains of industry like Krupp, and in honouring Jewish bankers, much to the disgust of his Prussian Junkers. He refuses to accept, as American ambassador, Mr. Hill, simply because, although rich in mental gifts and in a world-wide fame, the diplomat is not, in the opinion of the Kaiser, sufficiently rich in the material goods of this world worthily to represent his countrymen at a magnificent court like the Court of Berlin.

So thoroughly is the Kaiser steeped in materialism that intellectual and moral values count very little with him. He has made many a speech in Königsberg, but he has never mentioned the most illustrious citizen of Königsberg, Immanuel Kant. He has glorified Count Zeppelin as the greatest German of the nineteenth century, but I do not remember that he has ever mentioned the name of Goethe. It is true that he sent a telegram of sympathy to Mr. Rudyard Kipling during his illness in America; but then he sympathizes with Mr. Kipling not because he is a great writer and poet, but because he is an Imperialist.

No modern ruler except King Leopold of Belgium has more constantly kept in view the material interests of his subjects. Where his speeches do not deal with his own august personality, they deal largely with the commercial expansion of the empire. When he is not concerned about the needs of the fighting navy, he is concerned with the needs of the merchant service.

The Emperor may certainly claim a large share in the promotion of the naval expansion of modern Germany. It might almost be said that although love for the army is traditional in his house, that love is even surpassed by his love for the navy. It seems as if there were something more personal and more intimate in the Kaiser's attachment to the navy. It is the love of the parent for the child. The army he has inherited from his ancestors. *The navy, on the contrary, is his own creation.* Naval expansion dates from his reign. It was he who first told the Germans that their future was on the water: "*Unsere Zukunft ist auf dem Wasser.*" It was he who first offered them new oceans to conquer. The water seems to be the Kaiser's favourite element. He is an indefatigable yachtsman; he travels by sea even more than by land; he has advocated naval expansion more consistently and more passionately than any other cause. Again and again he has proclaimed that

"a prosperous development of the Vaterland is not conceivable without a continuous reinforcement of its sea power" (December 1902).

2. We have dwelt on the megalomania of the Kaiser. But his countrymen are not as unpleasantly impressed by this aspect of the Kaiser's character as we are ourselves, because his megalomania is often only the expression of that of his people. A Hungarian writer, the late Dr. Emil Reich, has written a book on "Germany's Swelled Head," and there can be no doubt that the German people in the last generation have become intoxicated with their political and commercial triumphs. When the Kaiser says: "The ocean proves that without Germany and without a German Kaiser no great discussion shall henceforth take place. I am not inclined to think that our German people have fought and vanquished thirty-three years ago, under the leadership of their princes, merely to be shoved aside in the great issues of a world policy," such utterances send a thrill through every jingo heart.

3. In the same way his egotism and self-assertion and his brutality, offensive as they may appear to us, only reflect the self-assertion and aggressiveness of the latter-day Teuton. When he shakes the mailed fist, when he warns his enemies, when he goes to Tangier or to Constantinople, he has the hearty and unanimous



support of his subjects, with the exception of the Socialists.

And, generally speaking, it is because the Kaiser is so thoroughly modern and so thoroughly German that he has received in such an ample measure the applause for which he craves. He may be unpopular with the educated upper ten thousand, who read the political satires of *Simplicissimus*, but he is popular with the millions who read *Die Woche*. He is popular because he is representative of the modern German people. He may often have blundered, but he understands the soul of the mob. He may be self-willed and indulge his impulses, but those impulses generally are also the impulses of his subjects; and it must be said in justice to the Kaiser that too often he has been blamed for the indiscretions of the German people.

There can be no doubt as to the enormous influence and popularity of the Kaiser. But there have been many misunderstandings between him and his subjects. The most serious was no doubt that which followed the publication of the *Daily Telegraph* interview. Any outsider who would have formed his judgment mainly from the speeches delivered in the Reichstag on that occasion would have been justified in predicting an imminent revolution. He would have concluded that the Emperor



had, like a reckless spendthrift, squandered the rich inheritance of loyalty and devotion handed down from his ancestors, and that there remained nothing for him to do but abdicate. Fortunately for the Kaiser, political speeches in Germany have not the same significance and do not carry the same weight as in England, and the storm which swept over Germany in 1908, so far from being an argument proving the decline of the Kaiser's power, only tested and attested his strength. Surely a formidable storm is the best criterion whether a tree is firmly rooted in the soil. And a power which stood the hurricane of 1908 will stand almost anything. A ruler who emerged from that crisis more popular than ever can look confidently to the future.

It must be carefully noted that that popularity has not been bought or maintained at the sacrifice of one jot or tittle of his Imperial claims. Prince von Bülow may have made platonic concessions, but the Kaiser maintained his Imperial prerogative undiminished, and in no previous utterances has he asserted his Divine Right more emphatically than in the speeches which followed the crisis of 1908. After twenty-five years of reign, and after grievous mistakes, the Kaiser finds himself to-day stronger than when he ascended the throne in 1888. After twenty-five years he is a greater force in world politics than any other statesman or ruler living.

## IV.

*Is the influence of the Kaiser making for  
Peace or for War?*

We must now approach the final problem which presents itself to our consideration: Is the tremendous power and popularity of the Kaiser exercised in the direction of peace or in the direction of war?

To an Englishman the Kaiser's devotion to military pursuits, his frequent brandishing of the sword, his aggressive policy of naval expansion, seem to be in flagrant contradiction with his no less persistent protests of both his sympathy for England and of his love for peace. We are reminded that Napoleon the Third also delighted to express his love for peace—" *L'Empire c'est la paix*"—yet he brought about the most disastrous war in French history. We are reminded that Nicholas the Second of Russia also started his reign as the peacemaker of Europe, the initiator of the Conference of The Hague, yet he brought about the most bloody war in Russian history. Are the Kaiser's pacific protests as futile, are his sympathies as hollow, as those of a Napoleon or a Nicholas?

With regard to his sympathies for England we can only say that there are no reasons to doubt his sincerity. His upbringing has been largely English, and his mother, Empress Frederick, was nicknamed the "English Woman." The most pleasant reminiscences of his childhood are associated with his visits to his grandmother at Windsor or at the Isle of Wight. And he has retained his English tastes, his love for sport, his love of the sea. He has not confined himself to expressing platonic sympathies for England. Those sympathies have often been supported by active demonstrations, and by demonstrations which have demanded no small measure of courage. We may blame the Kaiser for the *Daily Telegraph* interview, we may all agree in considering it a masterpiece of indiscretion, yet we must admire the moral courage with which the Kaiser dared to support the unpopular cause.

And similarly, with regard to the Kaiser's protests of peace we have no reason to doubt that he is perfectly genuine. We ought to believe him, if for no other reason than this, that a peaceful policy is in the obvious interest of the Kaiser and his dynasty. Whatever may be the future policy of German jingoism, the Kaiser certainly does not want war. For he has nothing to gain from war, and everything to lose. The tragedy of the Russo-Japanese

War has taught him the terrible chances of the battlefield. It would be senseless for him to jeopardize, with a light heart, the magnificent empire inherited from his ancestors. And if any one were inclined to wonder at the strange combination of militarism and pacifism in the Kaiser's mind, he has only to remember that one of the most original kings of Prussia also combined an almost morbid passion for soldiers with an inveterate love for peace. The Sergeant-King, the father of Frederick the Great, who collected tall grenadiers as others would collect art treasures, retained all through life a wholesome dread of war, because he would not expose himself to the risk of losing or damaging the splendid army which he had spent his lifetime in organizing.

Unfortunately, if the Kaiser's protests of peace are supported by many of his utterances, and sanctioned by the interests of his dynasty, they are contradicted not only by many other utterances, but, what is more serious, they are contradicted by his personal methods, and, above all, by the whole trend of his general policy.

Very few observers have pointed out one special reason why the personal methods of the Kaiser will prove in the end dangerous to peace—namely, that they have tended to paralyze or destroy the methods of diplomacy.

I am not by any means enamoured of the

tone and spirit of the present diplomatic profession. The diplomatic service to-day in most countries is largely recruited from the upper ten thousand: it is largely composed of *grande*es imbued with the pride of caste. Its members are chosen not for their intellectual or moral qualities, but mainly for their social position. The diplomatic service is the stronghold of reaction: it is steeped in the vapid atmosphere of "society": it is anti-national and anti-patriotic: it constitutes an international freemasonry of cynical and sceptical reactionaries.

But little as we may like the *personnel* of legations and embassies, strongly as we disapprove of the methods by which they are recruited, urgent as is the reform of the Foreign Office, it remains no less true that the function of diplomacy is more vital to-day than it ever was in the past. For it is of the very purpose and *raison d'être* of diplomacy to be conciliatory and pacific. Its object is to achieve by persuasion and negotiation what otherwise must be left to the arbitrament of war. It is a commonplace on the part of Radicals to protest against the practices of occult diplomacy. In so far as that protest is directed against the spirit which animates the members of the diplomatic service, it is fully justified. But in so far as it is directed against the principle of secret negotiation the protest is absurd. For it is of



the very essence of diplomacy that it shall be secret, that it shall be left to experts, that it shall be removed from the heated atmosphere of popular assemblies, and that it shall substitute an appeal to intellect and reason for the appeal to popular emotion and popular prejudice.

For that reason it is deeply to be regretted that the personal interferences of the Kaiser have taken German diplomacy out of the hands of negotiators professionally interested in a peaceful solution of international difficulties, and have indirectly brought diplomacy under the influence of the German "patriot" and the jingo. An ambassador need not depend on outside approval, his work is done in quiet and solitude. The Kaiser, on the contrary, conducts his foreign policy in the glaring limelight of publicity; and whenever he has been criticized by experts, his vanity has only too often been tempted to appeal to popular passion and to gain popular applause. For that reason, and entirely apart from his indiscretions, the bare fact that the Kaiser has become his own Foreign Secretary has lessened the chances of peace.

Nor has the whole trend of his domestic policy been less injurious to the cause of peace. In vain does the Kaiser assure us of his pacific intentions: a ruler cannot with impunity glorify for ever the wars of the past, spend most of the resources of his people on the preparations for



the wars of the future, encourage the warlike spirit, make the duel compulsory on officers and the *mensur* honourable to students, place his chief trust in his Junkers, who live and move and have their being in the game of war, foster the aggressive spirit in the nation, and hold out ambitions which can only be fulfilled by an appeal to arms : a ruler cannot for ever continue to sow the dragon's teeth and only reap harvests of yellow grain and golden grapes.

For those reasons also English public opinion is fully justified in distrusting the policy of the Kaiser. After all, like any ordinary mortal, his Majesty must submit to being judged not merely by his words, or his sympathies, or his platonic intentions, but by his deeds, by his spirit, and by his ideals. And neither those deeds, nor that spirit, nor those ideals, representative as they are of those of his subjects, are calculated to inspire us with any excessive confidence in the future.

## CONCLUSION.

THERE are many types of political fatalism, represented by many different temperaments and proceeding from many different attitudes to life, and yet conducing in the end to very similar results.

There is the fatalism of the optimist. It may be the optimism of the cynic, of the easy-going and listless man of the world, or it may be the optimism of the idealist, of the religious enthusiast. They will all agree in telling us that war is impossible; that it is a monstrous anachronism; that we need not divert our attention from our peaceful avocations to ward off a danger which may be purely imaginary, and may only exist in the brain of scaremongers and alarmists; that sufficient for the day is the evil thereof, and that the pressing evils of to-day are our social and political sores—that those must have a first claim on our attention; that we ought to leave a delicate subject alone, and that in the very interests of peace the less we think about war the better. They tell us that God in His providence will help us, and that we somehow

shall muddle through ; that, at anyrate, there can be no harm in letting things *drift*. For must not the *drift* and tendency of twentieth-century civilization be towards progress and peace and the brotherhood of nations ?

On the other hand, we are confronted with the political fatalism of the pessimist, which must necessarily be less varied and more definite than that of the optimist. Whereas the one tells us that war is impossible, the other proclaims that war is inevitable, that things have gone too far, that all the forces of to-day—the “will to power” of a hundred million German people believing in the providential mission of their race and dreaming the noble dream of a Greater Germany controlling the destinies of continental Europe, the personality of the Kaiser, the professional interests of the military caste, the vested interests of the industrial class, the perverted patriotism of the jingo, the dread of Socialism—that all those forces, the noblest as well as the basest, are working for war. We are told that it is no use struggling against the inevitable, and that the boldest and most heroic course is also the safest ; that we must look the danger full in the face ; that *if* war is to come, and *because* war is certain to come, it is best to anticipate it and to fight at our own time and on our own ground.

Considering the present international situation and the temper of the German people and the policy of the German Government, one might be tempted to accept the premises of the pessimist, if history had not again and again given the lie to previous prophecies, if experience did not show us that again and again wars have been declared to be inevitable which yet have been avoided by the goodwill and common-sense of the people. Within living memory, France and England, France and Germany, England and Russia have in turn repeatedly prepared to plunge into war, because those nations mutually accused each other in their metaphorical phraseology of stealing one of the numberless "keys" which unlocked one of the numberless "gates" which opened on those nations' possessions—keys of India, keys of Egypt, gates of the Mediterranean, gates of the Black Sea, gates of the Pacific. According to the political prophets, England was doomed to wage war against France, the "hereditary enemy," about Siam, or about Fashoda, or about West Africa. Similarly England was doomed to wage war against Russia, who was also the "hereditary enemy," because the Russian advance in Asia threatened India, because Russia had occupied near the Persian frontier the barren oasis of Merv, which induced periodical fits of "*Mervousness*" in the British public. Let any reader consult news-

paper files of the last twenty years, and he will find that they teem with such scares and alarms and prophecies of war. Yet none of those wars so confidently prophesied have come about, and for forty-two years Continental Powers have lived in peace with each other. It is true that the peace has been lamentably precarious—that it has been a truce of menacing hosts transforming Europe into a huge armed encampment; but still even an armed truce with all its burdens is better than actual war with all its horrors.

We must therefore be careful before we accept the premises of the pessimistic fatalist. And even if those premises were correct, his practical conclusions would not be justified. To say that war is unavoidable does not suffice to prove that it is for us to declare it. As long as there is the remotest chance of avoiding war, it would be criminal to transform a dread probability into a grim certainty. And even the argument that the attack would, strategically, be more favourable than the defence cannot be accepted; for the awful responsibility of initiating a fratricidal war would not in the long run be found to be a source of strength, and the odium incurred by the aggressor would more than counterbalance the strategic advantages of the offensive. On the one hand, the attacked nation would thereby be animated with the

energy of despair, and, on the other hand, the attacking nation would forfeit the moral support of the civilized world.

It may be true that the present outlook is so gloomy as to justify the worst anticipations of the pessimist. We would even go so far as to say that war is actually unavoidable, *if* the present forces continued to be operative ; *if* the world continues to be given over to territorial greed and overweening pride, to national selfishness, to perverted patriotism, and to imbecile ignorance. But, then, those forces making for war may be neutralized, those motives may be altered, for they are based, to use the expression of Mr. Angell, on an "optical illusion ;" for the whole fabric of military Imperialism rests on groundless assumptions. Let us prove to the man in the street the reality of that illusion, the baselessness of those assumptions, and the nightmare of war must vanish.

War can be avoided, but on those terms alone, and not on any other. War cannot be avoided merely by the tactics of diplomacy, by the time-honoured and time-worn devices of secret negotiations. The repeated "conversations" between England and Germany have invariably led, and must inevitably have led, to a deadlock. War cannot be avoided unless for the military ideals of the past we substitute the new ideals of our industrial civilization. War



cannot be avoided so long as both the people and their rulers believe that war may be a fruitful source of material and moral blessings, that it is not in itself evil, that it calls out the noblest traits of human character, and that it is to a successful war rather than to industry and honest hard work that a nation must look in order to reach the pinnacle of prosperity.

Nothing could well be more shallow, more dishonest and contradictory, and therefore more futile, than the arguments of the average English journalist controverting our German neighbours; nothing could be more dishonest, because the English journalist denounces the new German Imperialism of Mr. Houston Stewart Chamberlain, whilst in the same breath extolling the old English Imperialism of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain—because he tells the German public that “Greater Germany” is bad, whilst at the same time he tells the English public that “Greater Britain” is good and Little Englandism high treason; nothing could be more dishonest, because from the point of view of the old Imperialism it is surely unfair to deny to the German people that very expansion and supremacy which the Englishman claims for his own race; and, finally, nothing could be more futile, because any German reader of average intelligence must see through such flagrant contradictions, and all our English arguments

against German expansion must fall on deaf Teutonic ears.

Let us once more pass in review some of those hackneyed arguments, and let us try to look at the whole problem with the eye of a German patriot.

The English diplomatist proposes a reduction of armaments—that is to say, he demands from Germany that she shall recognize the “two-power” standard; he demands from Germany that she shall accept for ever, not the equality, but the supremacy, of England. But we naturally ask, Why should Germany recognize the absolute necessity of English supremacy and submit to it as if it were a providential law? In vain do we tell the Germans that such a maritime supremacy is necessary to the security, nay, to the very subsistence, of the English people. Again, why should the Germans be specially concerned about the threatened security of the English people, especially if the Germans think that a powerful navy will do for them what a powerful navy has done for England—if, as Admiral Mahan contends, England owes her greatness, not to her freedom, not to her sterling moral and intellectual qualities, not to her coal and her iron, but mainly to her sea power?

And even if Germany, for the sake of peace, were to consent to the principle of a reduction of armaments, how could such an agreement be

carried out in practice? For what is proposed is obviously not merely a reduction in the quantity of vessels, but in their quality and fighting power. Will it, therefore, be forbidden to the Germans under the agreement to improve that fighting power, to build more formidable battleships, to "out-Dreadnought" the Dreadnoughts? Is Germany to give due warning of every new invention which increases the destructive capacity of her navy?

And, what is even more important, how is it possible to keep the relation between the English and German navies a fixed quantity when the relations of all the other navies to each other and to England and to Germany are constantly changing? \* Is it not obvious that neither England nor Germany can only build with reference to each other, and ignore the navies of other countries? If England and Germany came to a naval agreement, England, no doubt, would be safe as against Germany. But would Germany be safe as against the navies of the United States, of Japan, of Russia, of France? On the one hand, how could such an agreement be effective unless it were to include all the other navies? and, on the other hand, how could Germany accept such an agreement with England unless it were converted into an actual alliance?

\* I need only refer to the formidable new fleet which Russia is building, and which may threaten Germany in the Baltic.

Again, the English diplomatist objects to German expansion, say, in Belgium or Holland, or in Turkey and Asia Minor, because such expansion would disturb the balance of power and ensure German supremacy on the European continent. But the Germans legitimately reply—and we saw that General von Bernhardt is very emphatic on that very point—that they refuse to accept the antiquated and unfair doctrine of the “balance of power.” And from the German point of view, who would dare to say that the Germans are wrong? England claims supremacy on sea: why should not Germany claim supremacy on land? English-speaking nations actually do control between them four out of the five continents of our sublunary world—they control America and Australia, Asia and Africa—and they are justly proud of this world expansion of one race. Why, then, should it be forbidden to the German-speaking nations to aim at controlling the fifth continent of Europe, and at establishing on that continent a federation of German-speaking people? In any case, one race must some day control the European continent, and as the day of the Latin is past, the choice must necessarily lie between the Slav and the Teuton. Already two hundred million Slavs are confronting seventy million Germans. Shall the Germans yield to the sheer weight of

numbers, and to a semi-civilized race which even England generally admits to be inferior to the Teuton? Shall Germany surrender her continental supremacy merely to indulge the jealousy of England?

Again, the English diplomatist says: "We object to any increase of the German navy because such an increase compels England to still further add to the crushing burden of taxation, and because a formidable German fleet can only be intended against England." The German indignantly replies that Germany is not concerned with relieving the burden of the English taxpayer; that a great nation like Germany has the right to build any number of ships she chooses; that although a formidable German navy may eventually be an efficient weapon against England, it need not be used against England—that it might quite as likely be used against Russia, or China, or France, or Japan, and that whether it shall be used against England or not must entirely depend on the future policy of England.

Again the English diplomatist retorts that there is no justification for Germany building a large navy; that Germany has no coastline to defend; that she has only two or three harbours in the open sea; that both history and geography have made Germany a continent. "That is true," replies the German; "but both



history and geography can be changed, will be changed, must be changed. History is a perpetual flux. Nations rise and fall. Geographical boundaries are continually being shifted. Ask a cartographer like Dr. Bartholomew whether there is any finality in map-making. Has not England herself repainted in red the greater part of the world in less than twenty years? And if the map of the world has been entirely repainted in the last few years in favour of England, surely it may be repainted a little in the colours of Germany. Your English publicists point out—and, alas! quite rightly—that we have only two or three good harbours to protect, and that one single ship sunk might block the traffic of the Kiel Canal! But, surely, no statesman in his senses and with any forethought and imagination will believe for one moment that such a monstrous state of things can continue much longer; that the German Empire can consent to have its fleet locked up for ever in the Baltic; that Germany with her enormous oversea trade can be for ever satisfied with Hamburg and Bremen and with her few miles of shallow and sandy coast. Germany does not want at present to incorporate Holland and, much less, Belgium with its three million French-speaking people—Germany has plenty of troublesome racial problems to deal with in the meantime; but whether Germany wants them or not,



those countries, sooner or later, are bound to become part of the empire. Economically the Low Countries are already German, and their incorporation in the German Zollverein is only a question of years. That England should dread such a contingency is only natural, but it is in the logic of events, it is in the logic of geography and economics. If geography and economics have favoured England in the past, why should they not favour Germany in the future?

“England cannot help the expansion of Germany; she cannot prevent the population of Germany increasing at the rate of one million a year, any more than the Germans themselves can prevent the population of Russia from increasing at the rate of two millions a year. If England is bent on opposing the commercial and territorial expansion of her neighbours—if she is bent on preventing the giant child from attaining its full stature—the conflict will be indeed inevitable. And for that conflict Germany must be prepared; and it is in view of that conflict—possible, if not certain—that Germany is arming. The Germans are building not for to-day but for to-morrow. The Kaiser’s navy is not meant to defend the hundred miles of coastline which Germany at present possesses in the open sea, but the three hundred miles she is bound to possess in the near future.”

And thus we might continue the argument *ad infinitum*, and no patriotic German would budge and give in by one inch, for there is no one English argument which would not and could not be met by a counter German argument. Any English argument must necessarily fail to carry weight with the Germans because the German starts from different assumptions, and views the international situation from his own German position. And that position is perfectly solid, and those assumptions are perfectly valid. What is even more serious and ominous, so far as the prospects of peace are concerned, the German, who knows that he is right from his own point of view, knows that he is also right from the English point of view; *he knows that the premises on which he is reasoning are still accepted by a large section of the English people.* Millions of English people are actuated in their policy by those very Imperialistic principles on which the Germans take their stand. After all, German statesmen are only applying the political lessons which England has taught them, which Mr. Rudyard Kipling has sung, and Mr. Chamberlain has proclaimed in speeches innumerable. Both the English Imperialist and the German Imperialist believe that the greatness of a country does not depend mainly on the virtues of the people, or on the resources of the home country, but largely on

the capacity of the home country to acquire and to retain large tracts of territory all over the world. Both the English Imperialist and the German Imperialist have learnt the doctrine of Admiral Mahan, that the greatness and prosperity of a country depends mainly on sea power. Both believe that efficiency and success in war is one of the main conditions of national prosperity.

Now, as long as the two nations do not rise to a saner political ideal, as long as both English and German people are agreed in accepting the current political philosophy, as long as both nations shall consider military power not merely as a necessary and temporary evil to submit to, but as a permanent and noble ideal to strive after, the German argument remains unanswerable. War is indeed predestined, and no diplomatists sitting round a great table in the Wilhelmstrasse or the Ballplatz or the Quai d'Orsay will be able to ward off the inevitable. It is only, therefore, in so far as both nations will move away from the old political philosophy that an understanding between Germany and England will become possible. As we stated in the opening chapter of this book, *the majority of the British people are, no doubt, fast moving away from the old position.* The ideal of a free federation of self-governing communities has taken the place of the old Imperial ideal, and the British Government has consistently applied

it in practice. Unfortunately *the majority of the German people still stand in the position where the English people stood before Cobden and Bright and Gladstone.* The German people still live under the spell of Prussia. The Imperial Eagle, the bird of prey, still remains the dread symbol of German Imperialism. The majority of the German people still believe in the virtues of protection, of nationalism, of militarism and despotism. And being thus steeped as they are in political materialism, in *Realpolitik*—still believing, as they do, that national prosperity is due, not to economic or intellectual or moral or political superiority, but to military superiority; believing, as they do, that a victory on the battlefield confers upon the victors by some mysterious process a greater capacity to produce and to sell more cheaply in the markets of the world; believing, as they do, that war is not a waste of economic power, but the best means of acquiring wealth; in short, believing, as they do, that to-day they are rich and prosperous mainly because in 1870 they beat the French people, why should they not believe and trust that in 1915 they would become even stronger and richer if they succeeded in beating the English?

No diplomatic negotiations can alter the fact that the whole fabric of German politics is based on militarism and Imperialism. We must repeat for the last time the *Leitmotiv* of this

book: If, as the result of some internal difficulty or external contingency, those military and Imperialist motives be allowed to gather strength, then indeed the political pessimist is right—war is inevitable. What Mr. Wells says of the social unrest—that it is, above all, a question of psychology—is even more true of the international unrest. It is not a question of economic values; it is a question of moral values. It is not a question of diplomatic moves and counter-moves; it is a question of mental states, a question of ideas and ideals.

Once again, then, it is the ideas and the ideals that must be fundamentally changed: "*Instauratio facienda ab imis fundamentis.*" And those ideals once changed, all motives for a war between England and Germany would vanish as by magic. But alas! ideas and ideals do not change by magic or prestige—they can only change by the slow operation of intellectual conversion. Arguments alone can do it. No banquets, even of journalists, no visits, even by Viscount Haldane, will achieve it. Only the systematic education of public opinion will perform the miracle.

Towards that political education and conversion the schools will do—must do—a great deal in the future. They are doing very little in the present. At present the intellectual training of the schoolboy is hopelessly antiquated, and is almost entirely based on the study of the military



civilizations of the past. The mind of the school-boy imbibes from his earliest years the poison of militarism and of the old Imperialism. He only learns about the glamour and the romance of the wars of olden days ; he learns nothing about the horrors and realities of the war of to-day.

And towards that political education the Universities will do—must do—a great deal in the future. They are doing at present little more than the schools. At present in England the Universities are still lamentably reactionary, and in Germany the Universities are still largely dependent on a military government.

Towards that political conversion the Churches will do—must do—a great deal in the future. At present they are doing least of all. For in Germany the Protestant Churches have lost the confidence of the people ; and it almost seems as if the Catholic Church would view with favour a war with heretical England and atheistic France—a war which would create a Catholic Greater Germany and would restore the Holy Roman Empire.

And, finally, if from the consideration of the intellectual and spiritual forces we pass on to an estimation of the forces of finance and commerce, we find that even those forces are still divided between peace and war. It may be true, as Mr. Norman Angell attempts to prove, that bankers and financiers are increasingly



made to feel the solidarity of nations ; but there are other forces and vested interests in the economic world which are only too directly interested in the furtherance of war.

The outlook, then, can hardly be said to be hopeful ; but this is only an additional incentive to be more strenuous in our peaceful endeavours, and to waste none of our efforts in cant and delusion. Pious intentions and platonic aspirations will not suffice. "*Porro unum est necessarium !*" The one thing urgently needed to-day is to bring the whole influence of education to bear on the conversion of the people. And this conversion cannot come from an impulse of the heart ; it must be reached mainly as a conclusion of the brain. One book, like the masterpiece of Mr. Norman Angell, if spread in hundreds of thousands of copies, would do more for the cause of peace than all the resolutions of a dozen peace conferences. Peace, above all, will have to be achieved by hard thinking. It must be thought out and fought out, first in the silent meditation of the study, to be heralded after by the loud sounding voices of the Press, to be instilled into the minds of the growing generation.

Whilst this *intellectual* conversion of public opinion is preparing, and whilst we are spreading the *doctrine* rather than the *gospel* of peace, let us, at the same time, be watchful of those who would threaten us with war, and whose victory

would prevent for generations to come the realization of our ideal. Some misguided pacifists are never tired of telling us that in all consistency it ought to be our first and immediate duty strenuously to oppose the mad race in armaments. I fail to see the logic of their conclusion. The doctrine of peace is not the Tolstoyan gospel of non-resistance ; it is, indeed, its very negation. It is no part of the doctrine of the pacifist that he shall place himself at the mercy of the militarist, and that in his very endeavour to secure peace he shall disarm himself whilst the militarist is preparing to attack him. The Utopian says : "Disarmament first, conversion afterwards." Common-sense and sound reason reply : "Such a policy would be suicidal. Faith must precede works. Let the world be first converted, and disarmament must needs follow." The late Mr. Stead, who was ever an enthusiast in the cause of peace, was all the more determined that this country should not relax in her determination to maintain her naval supremacy. We can only hope that England, which to-day more than any other country—more, even, than republican France—represents the ideals of a pacific and industrial democracy, may never be called upon to assert her supremacy in armed conflict, and to safeguard those ideals against a wanton attack on the part of the most formidable and most systematic military power the world has ever seen.

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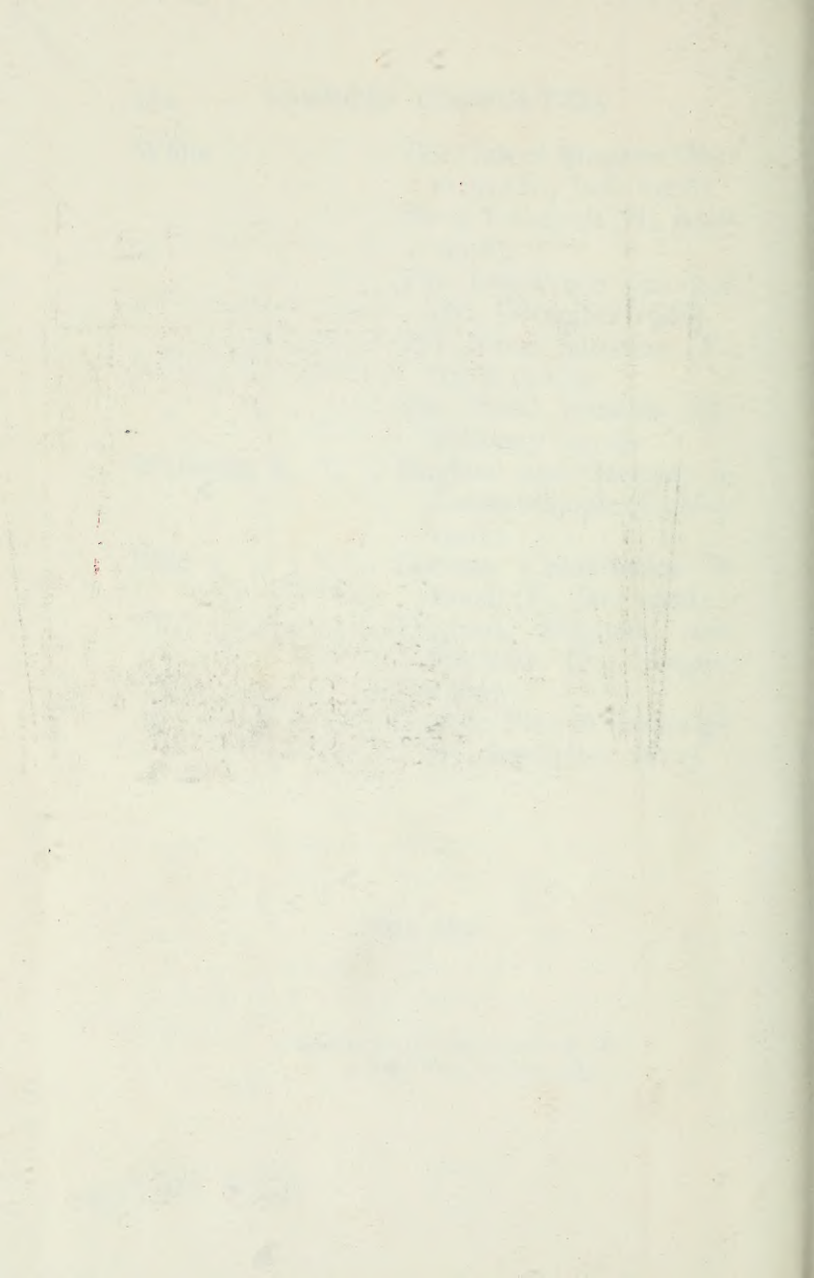
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